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BEYOND THE BINARIES TO SELF-FASHIONING: IDENTITY AS THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL STYLE

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by

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Dedication

To my parents, William & Mamie Patterson,

for instilling in me the importance of and passion for education

and to my husband, Christopher Greene,

for encouraging me to follow my bliss.

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BEYOND THE BINARIES TO SELF-FASHIONING: IDENTITY AS THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL STYLE

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This dissertation explores how identity functions as a "site of struggle" in contemporary postmodern society. Although there has been research on identity, scholars mainly have viewed it from standpoints that argue in favor of or against "identity politics." Contrary to these perspectives, this dissertation suggests that we need to reassess its political potential and evaluate why politics remains vital to discussions of identity. It proposes that one of the best ways to consider identity under these postmodern conditions it to view it as both a communicative and rhetorical practice that is manifested within social style. Specifically, it examines how our contemporary identities are intrinsically linked to the social styles that we have or how we represent ourselves using social styles. Utilizing the method of rhetorical homology, it analyzes two case studies—the transgender text of Buck Angel and a comparison of two prominent political families, the Kennedys and the Bushes, to demonstrate how identity functions as a form of social style with political and social implications. Thus, this dissertation explains how identity is inherently communicative and rhetorical, and especially in postmodern conditions, social style seems to be where identity is created, managed, and struggled over.

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Ch 1: Introduction-Viewing Identity as One-Dimensional, or The Problem with a Single Category Identity Politics (SCIP) Approach

> "Identity is such a concept—operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" Stuart Hall—*Questions of Cultural Identity*

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

Recently, Harvard University president, Larry Summers, resigned succumbing to pressure he received from groups such as NOW due to his comments at an academic conference in which he claimed that men are genetically-predisposed to be better in math and science than women (Dobbs A02; Marklein 10B). Consequently, your female boss creates a committee to address discrimination in the workplace, yet only recruits women claiming that "it's a man's world" and women will be more sensitive to these kinds of issues than men. Meanwhile, since Dean Hamer's 1993 study that homosexuality might be biologically-determined, the scientific community and press engage in heated debates over the viability of a "gay gene" (WGBH Educational Foundation).

Agreeing with this proposition of a "gay gene," a best friend of yours, who is "straight," thinks that all gay men are inherently better at fashion and home decorating than "straight" people. Simultaneously, your cousin, who is a gay man, claims that gay people are just more artistically inclined than "straight" people. Finally, in academia, fellow scholars frequently assume that a person's research will be based upon his or her identity such that if you are a woman your focus is on gender or women's studies, if you

are gay your focus is on "gay issues" or sexual orientation, and if you are African-American, then you most certainly concentrate on African-American studies or research "black issues." Each of these examples often is labeled as *identity politics*, which is defined as a group's claim of shared identity that spurs political action (Woodward 24). However, the depictions of identity politics in the above examples are problematic because they are a *particular kind* of identity politics that assumes identity is rooted in a single category, and unified as a result, or what I will refer to as the SCIP approach.

In the wake of the "culture wars," this SCIP view has become a major site of fierce contestation. Consequently, it has become the primary way that scholars address issues of identity with the *politics* of identity politics as a mainstay of scholarly discussion. While identity politics in general has some merits, the continuous concentration on identity *largely* in terms of single category identity politics, (SCIP), becomes a view of identity in the extreme. This obsession with the SCIP view also creates a meta-conversation in which scholars battle over the validity of SCIP to the political realm instead of examining how or why *identity* remains a crucial area of study.

Therefore, I argue that by considering identity mainly in terms of single category identity politics, people construct a one-dimensional view of identity that does not account for the dynamic nature of this multifaceted phenomenon. By viewing identity exclusively in terms of a SCIP approach, they obscure or overlook other crucial issues related to the ways in which we constitute our identities and make sense of them today. Further, I believe this viewpoint of identity politics also closes off an understanding of politics itself in the sense that it roots political struggle within one dynamic as well.

Hence, we need a theoretical and methodological framework for studying identity that avoids the simplistic perspective of the SCIP approach while simultaneously producing a more complicated view of identity that shows how it can be both polycategorical and unified. To that end, I propose that we need a perspective that shifts the discussion of identity to a broader plane than just debating the politics of SCIP. Instead of the SCIP approach to identity, I contend that especially in contemporary times, identity needs to be seen as communicative and rhetorical because it is the means by which people communicate who they are, it influences social relationships, and yet it is still a viable site of political struggle today. Specifically, I propose that to create and manage our identities today, a *key* way that we do so is by utilizing various styles and employing them rhetorically to influence others about who we are, who we want to be, or who we are becoming (Jenkins 5).

Therefore, I offer the notion of *polystylism* as an alternative view to SCIP because it accounts for multiplicity rather than viewing identity as rooted within a single category. Originating within the field of music, the term "polystylism" comes from the work of Alfred Schnittke, a "postmodernist Russian composer who created serious, dark-toned musical works *characterized by abrupt juxtapositions of radically different, often contradictory, styles*" (emphasis added, Encyclopedia Britannica Online Academic Edition). Extending this terminology to the creation of identities, I use the notion of *polystylism* to suggest that in employing our rhetorical performances of self, we utilize a variety of styles which can be polycategorical, have multiple meanings, and are sometimes contradictory.

These *stylized* identities, I maintain, are both socially influenced and may vary according to the social situations in which we find ourselves. In this sense, I propose that we are not only capable of using an assortment of styles; we also have the potential to produce multiple identities through our rhetorical performances of self. However, each of these propositions raises several questions for consideration. Now, I turn to the major research questions that I will address in this study.

MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does considering identity as rooted within a single category, or from a SCIP approach, lead to essentialist views of both identity itself and identity politics?
    a. Does regarding identity politics from a SCIP approach obscure or overlook other issues or perspectives about identity?
    b. What other kinds of politics or political struggle does viewing identity from a single category perspective close off or overlook?
2. Is it possible for people to construct identities that are both unified and polycategorical?
    a. Does viewing identity as a form of communication and rhetoric help scholars to consider whether it is polycategorical, yet unified?
    b. What is the notion of polystylism and how is this concept counter to a SCIP approach to identity?
3. How can scholars be sensitive to rhetoric and politics while not being essentialist to categories of identity?
    a. What are the political, social, and rhetorical implications of identity as created through social style?

b. Are some identities and social styles more or less privileged than others in contemporary American society?

In this chapter, I begin by tracing the roots of the single category identity politics, (SCIP), approach. Next, I discuss scholarly arguments in support of the SCIP view. Then, I argue that because this SCIP approach is rooted in essentialism it is highly problematic by reviewing arguments in support of a non-essentialist approach to identity. Finally, I will explain why this focus on single category identity politics, or a SCIP approach, is erroneous by providing a broader definition for identity, suggesting the principle of polystylism as an alternative perspective for analyzing it, and conclude with a preview of the scope of this dissertation.

THE ROOTS OF THE SINGLE CATEGORY IDENTITY POLITICS (SCIP) APPROACH

Many scholars trace the origins of identity politics to the social movements of the 1960s that were based on creating a sense of shared identity through claims of difference as a means of protesting a marginalized status within American society. Kathryn Woodward reveals that within identity politics, there is a celebration of identity while at the same time; there is a critique of governmental power and the oppression of marginalized groups such as gays and lesbians, women, and other minority groups (23-29). For example, the Women's Movement used the slogan "the personal is political" to emphasize that issues that occurred in the private domain, such as domestic violence, are just as important as those found within the public arena like equal pay. Similarly, the Black Power movement used the slogan "Black is beautiful" to create a form of solidarity

among African-Americans and as a form of resistance to the dominant power structure that served as a form of oppression and inequality (Woodward 23-29).

However, Craig Calhoun discloses that it is a mistake to view identity politics as arising from the 1960s movements because: "It [identity politics] has been part and parcel to modern political and social life for hundreds of years" (23). He claims that the difference between identity politics in the past and identity politics since the 1960s is that in the past people were concerned with "universalizing, difference-denying, ways of thinking about politics and social life…" or building coalitions between groups (23). In "Dawns, Twilights, and Transitions: Postmodern Theories, Politics, and Challenges" Steven Best and Douglas Kellner clarify that in the 1960s "the movement" pursued both "a coalition and alliance politics and challenged the dominant powers on multiple levels—gender, race, the hierarchical structure of the universities, colonial domination, US imperialism in Vietnam, the alienated nature of work, sexual repression, and the oppressive organization of everyday life" (106). This coalition-building became fragmented in the 1970s and therefore shifted into the "new social movements" of various groups that had their own interests based on identity such as gays and lesbians, Blacks, and environmentalists that were "each fighting for their own interests" (Best and Kellner 106).

This fragmentation, Best and Kellner claim only progressed through the 1980s and 1990s such that identity politics became the rule and not the exception which they believe "the very name [identity politics] suggesting a turn away from general social, political, and economic issues toward concerns with culture and subjectivity" (107). In

other words, since the fragmentation of the 1970s the term "identity politics" has become synonymous with the SCIP approach that defines a person or group's identity based upon a single category such as race, sexual orientation, or gender and all issues related to identity derive from this focal point. This SCIP approach has shaped the current political climate as many people see contemporary identity politics as directly rooted in a celebration of difference rather than coalition building across identities.

For the past three decades, scholars have wrestled with questions about the validity of identity politics in the midst of continuing debates. As Tim Edensor in *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* attests: "There has been an outpouring of writing on the concept of identity in recent sociological and cultural studies publications," with scholars such as Stuart Hall, Todd Gitlin, Zygmunt Bauman, Judith Butler, Donal Carbaugh, and Lawrence Grossberg focusing on identity in their work (24). In dealing with issues of identity, these scholars inevitably also address the subject of identity politics with many of them debating whether the prominence that SCIP has received in the past three decades is warranted or whether it is a subject that no longer should be at the forefront of scholarly study.

A number of them consider the value of identity politics in the current political climate with many arguing that we should abandon the question of identity in politics altogether (Gitlin in Evans 99; Brooks 17). That is to say, they assert that that identity has no place in politics because it only serves to weaken and obscure more relevant political matters. Thus, the crux of these debates becomes a battle over the politics of identity politics with many arguing either in favor of identity politics, meaning that it is still a

valid means of political struggle, or against identity politics, meaning that we should dismiss identity politics because it is not a viable form of political struggle.[1] Rather than recounting the debate itself, here I want to propose that this argument is one that is based upon *equating* identity politics with the SCIP view. Therefore, I will now outline the main arguments that supporters for this kind of single category identity politics make and why this is a problematic, one-dimensional view of identity that needs to be reconsidered.

Before reviewing these scholarly arguments that SCIP is still valuable to the political sphere, I must add a caveat. It is somewhat difficult to label scholars as "supporters" of SCIP because many do not label themselves as such. Instead, they refer to themselves in other ways such as critical race theorists or Afrocentrists. Further, even scholars who may consider identity politics itself significant often cite flaws with the single category perspective or call for changes to be made in how identity politics is employed by various groups.

Therefore, I will restrict my focus on "supporters," or what I label "binarists,"[2] to examining those scholars that define identity in terms of binary oppositions. These binary oppositions act in tandem in the process of labeling or creating definitions by operating as a pair of opposites such that one part of the binary is defined in direct opposition to the

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[1] Todd Gitlin and others argue that a focus on identity politics, such as race or gender, takes attention away from other political matters like challenging governmental policies (Gitlin in Calhoun 150). Another argument that critics make which parallels this perspective is that a focus on identity politics has caused left-wing politics in America to decline because instead of creating a common ground on which to stand, identity politics actually works to further divide and fragment the Left (Gitlin 16). However, Gitlin and others overlook the fact that identity has an impact on political, social, and material consequences for people and that people sometimes are discriminated against because of their identities.

[2] Mary Bernstein argues that there are many different uses of the term "identity politics." However, I will discuss what I label SCIP, or "binarist" approaches, which are rooted within a shared marginalized status and mainly locate identity within a single category such as race, gender, or sexual orientation ("Identity Politics" 47-48).

other. As such, binarists believe that identity politics is a viable source of political struggle *and* root identity as mainly experienced through a single category.

First, binarists argue that past notions of the relationship between identity and politics as trying to create a common bond across differences actually erases differences that are crucial to the creation of identities. They state that this kind of perspective about identity creates a universal, homogenized identity in which no differences are accounted for between different groups of people and their experiences. They assert that ironically this erasure of difference, or supporting a universal identity, actually ends up privileging one kind of identity (i.e. White, male, and heterosexual) over others. They also believe that the notion of a universal identity strips political power from marginalized groups because their differences become unacknowledged and obscured.

Scholar R. Anthony Slagle[3], in the work "In Defense of Queer Nation: From *Identity Politics* to a *Politics of Difference*," asserts that it is incorrect to assume that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals have the same experiences as heterosexuals or other marginalized groups (85). He argues that one of the problems with past gay and lesbian liberation movements is that they fought for the "assimilation of gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals into the mainstream" wanting them to participate in the "dominant system" (86). However, Slagle argues in opposition to these movements because this process of assimilation erases difference.

Expecting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to behave as if they are straight, according to Slagle, "is not realistic" or "reasonable" (86). Further, Slagle's standpoint parallels that

[3] Although I label him as a "binarist" here, he also challenges SCIP calling for a new politics based on difference that I will discuss later.

of many binarists when he contends: "To expect members of any marginalized group to deny their individual identities perpetuates the very ideologies that oppress them in the first place" (86). In other words, in trying to erase difference, a universal notion of identity, actually ends up serving as another form of oppression for groups that many argue are already marginalized. At the same time, advocates argue that identity politics makes these differences between people *visible* and serves as a source of strength and empowerment for marginalized groups.

Another argument that binarists make is that having a shared sense of unity based upon oppression or marginalization serves as a voice against social injustices that were and are still committed against minority groups. For example, in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class*, Robin Kelley traces the history of the Black working class and how some African-Americans were, and still are, able to unite based upon, not only class status, but especially due to racial identity as an oppressed group. Because they have shared experiences related to race, he claims that his work "looks at forms of resistance—organized and unorganized—that have remained outside of…what we've come to understand as the key figures and institutions in African American politics" (4-5).

Kelley recounts that historically Blacks have resisted their oppression in various ways, although these acts of resistance have not always been organized, stating he wants to look at "infrapolitics" which he maintains, "describes the daily confrontations, evasive actions, and stifled thoughts that often inform organized political movements"(8). Kelley uses an example of the rise of gangsta rap to argue how African-Americans resist today,

alleging that the styles employed by rap artists and their fans, such as "starter jackets" and "hoodies," allows them to "create their own identity—one that defines them as rebels" who resist police brutality and an oppressive system (205-207).

Paralleling this perspective, in "Race, Gender, and Obscenity: Reflections on *2 Live Crew*," Renee Lorraine roots her study in the identity politics of race arguing that rap music artists 2 Live Crew use their lyrics as a form of resistance for African-Americans explaining: "the lyrics are likely to deal with racism, apartheid, and nationalism…An independence and a celebration of Blackness is expressed, but also an anger at an establishment that make celebration and self determination difficult" (in Barrow et al. 120). However, she also criticizes the group arguing that the lyrics of 2 Live Crew project anger and claims that they are degrading and disrespectful to women (in Barrow et al. 120).

In the article, Lorraine also looks at the identity politics of gender and argues that within 2 Live Crew's lyrics women are victims of sexual exploitation and emotional abuse. She further believes that this kind of music is detrimental to women because these lyrics are "pornographic" and advocate "women are sexual objects, pieces of meat, appealing and yet disgusting…and are without value" (in Barrow et al. 122). She argues that one of the reasons that some women listen to 2 Live Crew's lyrics or perform as dancers during their shows is because they may have "internalized society's hatred of women" as: "Most women in our society, I suspect, first experience sexual activity in a situation in which they are resisting strong, persuasive advances…that being appealing

and available to men (especially powerful men) is what she is for, that sex is what she is for" (124).

Lorraine concludes that trying to silence 2 Live Crew as African-American men will further their oppression as "ghetto Blacks" and that the African-American community can deal with the problem themselves suggesting that one form of resistance for women is to create their own lyrics which parody those of the 2 Live Crew or to rap against sexism and another solution is to have "continuous dialogue" about the problem. (124-125). In other words, Lorraine's view of identity politics for African-Americans and women is rooted in the SCIP approach.

Another group of scholars that support SCIP label themselves as critical race theorists (CRTs) which scholar Audrey Olmsted reveals "grew out of a student boycott of law school classes at Harvard in 1981" when they requested that another non-White faculty member be hired to teach the course "Race, Racism and the American Law" as a replacement to a faculty member on temporary leave, were denied this request, and subsequently set up a boycott and alternative course (323). Olmsted notes: "Critical Race theorists argue that speech acts cause racism and that solutions to problems resulting from racism require the use of language to reshape reality" (324). Although there is no defining characteristic of this group, Olmsted argues that they believe that "1. Racism is endemic, inherent, and normal in American life; 2.Both white supremacists and people of color support racism through a process of hegemony; 3.Words are powerful and should be used to create counter-accounts of social reality; and 4.The individual life experiences of people of color should be recognized and made public" (325).

Therefore, Olmsted claims that critical race theorists rely heavily on trying to reshape how we view language because this affects how race is lived in American society (325). For example, in "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric" Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek outline how "whiteness" operates as a rhetorical strategy that is invisible, yet has powerful political implications (293-294). Paralleling this perspective, Ronald Jackson in "White Space, White Privilege: Mapping Discursive Inquiry into the Self" examines "why and how White participants defend White Space and White privilege" (39). Again, critical race theorists mainly root identity politics within the experience of race. Yet, there also is another group that views identity politics in this way.

Afrocentrists believe that the experiences of Africans and African-Americans need to be at the focus of scholarly research rooting identity in the single category of race. One example of Afrocentrist thinking is the work of communication scholar Molefi Asante[4] who argues that within the field of communication there should be a shift to an Afrocentrist focus in the field (in Lucaites, Condit and Caudill 552-555). Asante believes that within communication scholarship, people have not had a "holistic view" of humans declaring: "It is left, however, to more Afrocentric scholarship to capture the *true essence* of the communication person" (emphasis added in Lucaites, Condit and Caudill 554).

He also argues that communication scholars have been heavily influenced by a "Eurocentric" approach which is flawed because this approach does not account for the experiences of various groups stating: "Thus, the more-well trained, and without intervening training, an individual is in the European model, the more likely he is to

interpret the world through inadequate eyes" even if he is a minority scholar (in Lucaites, Condit and Caudill 554). Finally Asante puts forth that communication scholars, therefore, need to focus on African perspectives in communication concluding: "This is because of the congruence of African society with the demands of a person's inner-self for harmony…Our theoretical view must not emphasize the Western conflict view, but the more humanistic voice which is based on harmony" which he argues is at the focus of African societies that try to remove as much conflict as possible (in Lucaites, Condit and Caudill 561).

As the above examples demonstrate, binarist scholars locate identity in a single category of sexual orientation, gender, or race. However, the main problem with this SCIP approach and the above arguments is that, in viewing identity politics as rooted within a single category, scholars base identity construction on essentialist notions. Further, this SCIP approach leads to a one-dimensional view of identity itself. Now, I turn to problems with the SCIP approach by explaining how single category identity politics is essentialist, which can serve as a form of privilege for some groups while disempowering others, and offer some critiques of SCIP arguments.

PROBLEMS WITH THE SCIP APPROACH: IDENTITY AS ROOTED IN ESSENTIALISM

Identity, from an essentialist standpoint, is seen as being a "true" or "authentic" quality that is inherent in a person and does not change over time (Woodward 11). This perspective is most commonly associated with past notions of identity that were rooted in

[4] Although Asante would probably refer to his work as rooted in culture, I argue that the culture to which he refers largely is grounded in the single category of race.

17th and 18th century Enlightenment ideals, but also resurfaces in modern scholarship. As Craig Calhoun in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* argues we should not think that essentialism is limited to past notions of identity as this tension continually arises in various works and even those theories that try to operate against this assumption often risk becoming essentialist (13-14). For example, when Robin Kelley argues that the experiences of African-Americans in the United States are inherently the same due to their racial background and that those experiences are inherently different from other racial groups, he uses essentialism. As Woodward explains, these kinds of assumptions are "based on an essentialist version of history and of the past, where history is constructed or represented as an unchanging truth" which she maintains is an incorrect way to categorize identity (12). Definitions of identity from this perspective, Woodward argues, are maintained through the use of binary oppositions (11).

Remember, binary oppositions are based on pairs of opposites such that one part of the binary is defined in opposition to the other. Some examples of binaries are hot and cold, light and dark, and up and down. In his work *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke points out that these binary oppositions, which he labels as dialectic terms, are a function of language because people "invented the negative" which does not exist in nature. In creating "the negative," people began to be ruled and driven by a sense of order and separation such that when we consider things we consider them as constituted by what they are not, thus defining things in terms of their opposites (70).

In this categorization, what becomes problematic is that one of the binaries is always privileged in relation to the other (Woodward 36). That is to say, in society, one part of the binary is considered dominant or better than its opposite which can become a

"naturalized" way of considering the terms. Therefore, when one considers identity in essentialist terms, it reinforces hierarchical notions of identity or privileges one identity over another. In terms of identity politics, those notions of privilege also are reinforced with some groups viewed as marginal "Others" or oppressed in terms of other groups.

Binarists claim that the purpose of identity politics is to celebrate the difference of groups while utilizing a shared group identity as a source of empowerment and political mobilization. They advocate that members of marginalized groups have been oppressed by the "dominant" culture and a governmental system that essentializes their difference. However, in focusing on identity politics as mainly rooted within a single category, such as sexual orientation, they end up essentializing difference themselves. As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner explain:

> …there is a form of essentialism in many modes of identity politics which privilege gender, race, sexual preference, or some other marker as *the* constituent of identity... In other words, some versions of identity politics fetishize given constituents of identity, as if one of our multiple identity markers were *our deep and true self*, around which all of our life and politics revolve (emphasis added 107).

In other words, binarists often reify differences between groups and at the same time essentialize these differences as natural. This naturalization of difference, in turn, leads to further marginalization and oppression of groups. So, ironically, binarists often reinforce the very notions of difference that they are fighting against.

For example, earlier in this chapter I referred to Renee Lorraine's essay on the rap group 2 Live Crew. In this work, Lorraine ultimately provides an essentialist view of both African-Americans and women by rooting both of their experiences in oppression. She argues that African-Americans are largely oppressed by poverty and women are

largely the victims of a patriarchal system of sexual exploitation (120-125). These characterizations certainly are not the experiences of all members of these groups, but when trying to rely on a binarist approach to identity, Lorraine's argument is essentialist.

Instead of privileging the "non-Other" (i.e. White, male, heterosexual), which is why many argue that identity politics is necessary, binarists end up privileging the "Other." Therefore, groups that do not belong to the privileged "Other" become marginalized themselves and often are silenced within discourse. bell hooks argues that people speak from the positions in which they stand so someone whom is a "non-Other" may not be given a legitimate voice in matters of SCIP because they do not stand in a "marginalized" position (vii-9). For example, some feminists do not believe that a White, heterosexual man can speak on matters of gender discrimination because he is among the privileged oppressors.

As a result, the SCIP view assumes that a person's identity determines those political issues that he or she supports. It also assumes that a person's political agenda largely is rooted within a single category of identity such that a lesbian will fight for "lesbian issues" or those policies that directly affect sexual orientation. Finally, this essentialist perspective spills over into the idea that identity politics is rooted in demographic categories that are usually limited to race, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation. It is as if labeling someone's identity politics, from the SCIP view, is as easy as having that person fill out a survey about his or her demographics (i.e. check the box if you are black or white, gay or straight, male or female) and that will determine his or her political beliefs. As Lawrence Grossberg maintains there are differences between "anti-racist politics" and "the struggle over black identity" (149). Moreover, just because

someone identifies as Black does not mean that he or she supports anti-racist politics as Grossberg explains: “The problem arises when people assume that self-esteem and anti-racist politics are the same, or when movements such as Afrocentricism articulate them as equivalent” (Grossberg 149).

Single category identity politics also can cause people to become more fractionalized by dividing people into hyper-specific groups as it encourages people to see themselves as fundamentally different rather than trying to form alliances based on shared experiences or a common ground. Best and Kellner explain why this fragmentation is problematic asserting that while people should emphasize their group identities identity politics participants must be cautious about becoming too fragmented because: “Not all universal appeals are ideological in the sense criticized by Marx; there are common grounds of experience, general concerns, and similar forms of oppression that different groups share which should be articulated—concerns such as the degradation of the environment and common forms of oppression that stem from capitalist exploitation and alienated labor” (112-113). Therefore, a sole focus on SCIP can sometimes draw attention away from shared experiences or a common ground because of a focus on each group’s individual struggle.

Even scholars who align with some of the arguments presented by binarists also criticize its central tenets. Instead of the SCIP approach, they offer alternative views to identity politics such as supporting a politics of difference. For example, as stated earlier R. Anthony Slagle’s work makes some of the same arguments as binarists, however, he

points out that he wants scholars to leave identity politics behind and instead move to a politics of difference (85-86).

Therefore, Slagle proposes that one of the movements that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals should turn to is the queer movement as demonstrated by the group Queer Nation in which they avoid essentialism because they define their identities in terms of difference (86-87). Slagle further suggests: "Queer Nation, specifically transcends these paradoxes [of identity politics] by deconstructing the meaning of identity" imparting that although Queer Nation uses some strategies of identity politics, its membership is based on differences not similarities concluding: "Queer Nation is an exemplar of a new or re-conceptualized type of identity politics" (88). Finally because it uses "extreme activist rhetoric," disrupts and transcends boundaries, and "celebrates difference and diversity in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality among its membership," Slagle believes that this group serves as a form of resistance to the dominant system through direct confrontation and questioning (87-95). In other words, he envisions identity politics as a more dynamic and shifting form of political struggle than single category identity politics.

Similarly, in "Anti-Anti Identity Politics: Feminism, Democracy, and the Complexities of Citizenship," Susan Bickford claims that she is not going to support or dismiss identity politics, however, she will "contest the particular versions of identity politics…" (111). Bickford argues that many scholars characterize identity politics as creating a public identity based on "the suffering self: the oppressed are innocent selves defined by the wrongs done them" and what advocates seek is recognition (113). She cites the work of feminist scholars that she believes redefine the relationship between

identity and politics as multidimensional meaning "to indicate more than that identity is multiple…identity plays different kinds of political roles, is related to power in different ways. 'Identity' thus has multidimensional *effects* in the world. And the primary phenomena that identity (the assumption, assignment, and experience of identity) brings about are relations and separations" (119). Therefore, Bickford argues that we need to reconceptualize how we view identity and see it as a creation[5] or construction in which we can form political identities that are rooted in coalition-building and emphasize "a political ethic that focuses not on suffering innocence or compassion—but on anger, responsibility and courage" (123-125). In other words, Bickford calls for a more complicated view of the relationship instead of rooting identity politics in SCIP because this perspective neglects how various aspects of our identities interact and intersect with each other and how they fuse within our social, cultural, and material experiences. Now, I turn to scholarly arguments in favor of a non-essentialist approach to identity.

ARGUMENTS FOR A NON-ESSENTIALIST VIEW OF IDENTITY

In contrast to the SCIP approach, a *non-essentialist* view of identity would not see identity as universal nor would it view identity as having one defining feature, such as gender. Kathryn Woodward argues that a non-essentialist perspective would acknowledge that there are differences between people, but also that people have commonalities (12). Identity, in this sense, is defined according to groups to which we belong as well as how we are different than others, but these would not be rooted in any

[5] Susan Bickford's argument is that this creation of identity is rooted within the rhetorical. That is to say, she advocates that the main way our identities are created is through the uses of language and speech (119-

"authentic" or "natural" categorizations. A non-essentialist perspective views identity as changing and fluid. For example, a non-essentialist views people as having the same kinds of experiences across class lines or sees experiences of people who belong to one class as varied. In terms of identity politics, a non-essentialist perspective would allow for people from the same class to support different political agendas.

At the same time, a non-essentialist perspective questions and analyzes how definitions of identity change over time. For example, a non-essentialist perspective would argue that there is no one "Black identity" and instead we should look not only at how African-Americans have different experiences, but also those experiences that they may have in common with other racial groups. Politically, this suggests that groups can have a shared identity politics that is not rooted in a single category of identity. In other words, Hispanics and other racial groups may share the same political concerns and issues. Therefore, Woodward suggests that scholars should view identity from this standpoint by questioning both the classification systems in use and why people take on various subject positions (12).

As Lawrence Grossberg contends, we need to move away from discussing identity in terms of difference whether we are for or against identity politics (147). He insists that: "If instead of starting with identity, you start with difference (so that you celebrate difference or find difference in identity), you're still operating within the same structural logic" (150). In other words, by focusing on whether or not SCIP is beneficial or detrimental to politics, scholars sometimes miss the bigger picture of the multifaceted nature of identity as a site of struggle as well as how this functions in contemporary

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123). Agreeing with this perspective, I will return to this aspect of Bickford's work later in chapter two.

society. Further, a focus on single category identity politics neglects the complexities that are associated with the relationship between identity and politics.

Because it has become a bastion of scholarly contention, some even contemplate whether we should continue to make identity itself a focal point of scholarly debates, such as when cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall asks: "What then, is the need for a further debate about 'identity'? Who needs it?" to which he answers that it is still a vital issue to consider (in Hall and duGay 1). Largely, binarists (and critics) of SCIP often end up as parallels with both trapped in a world of binary oppositions in which they argue over the politics of identity politics. However, it seems likely that as Lawrence Grossberg alleges: "…we need new theories of identity…" that address the issue of identity in all of its complexity (in Wright 148).

If identity is a central issue in our lives that has political and social implications, then there is a need to further examine it. However, there also is a need for an alternative perspective of identity that does not limit it to a single category. This alternative perspective also has to be one that will foster a discussion of the complexities of identity with its relationship to capitalism, consumption, the mass media, changing social roles and categories, and politics. As Grossberg asserts in "'What's Going On?' Larry Grossberg on the Status Quo of Cultural Studies: An Interview," the way that we view identity needs to be changed such that it is not entirely rooted in issues of identity politics, or notions of essentialism versus anti-essentialism (in Wright 150). Instead, he insists, "What I do want to change are the ways in which we understand identities, and perhaps even the ways identities are produced. And most importantly I want to change the ways identities (and the categories that organize them) are deployed in our society…"

(in Wright 150). Therefore, I propose that this alternative view of identity begins by broadening how it is defined.

THE CHALLENGES OF A CONCEPT: IDENTITY DEFINED IN BROADER TERMS

The concept of identity has a rich interdisciplinary history as it has been studied in a variety of fields ranging from psychology to sociology as Paul Gilroy in "British Cultural Studies and the Pitfalls of Identity," reveals: "…[identity] has a lengthy presence in social thought, and a truly complex philosophical lineage that goes back to the pre-Socratics…" (in Curran, Morley, and Walkerdine 36). Paralleling this perspective, Dennis Wrong maintains that it is "one of the most widely used concept[s] these days in the social sciences and humanities from which it has passed into popular discourse" (10). In "The Crisis of 'Identity' in High Modernity," Mervyn Bendle asserts that scholars often use the term "identity" in their work without defining it causing it to be "undertheorized" or "they treat it as a *received* concept from psychoanalysis or psychology" without fully explicating how they are utilizing it (5). He concludes: "this range of complex, interrelated issues illustrates the conceptual burden that is being carried by the term 'identity,' and why arguments uncritically built upon it are problematic" (6).

Finally, scholars Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper in their article "Beyond 'Identity" claim that: "…the social sciences and humanities have surrendered to the word 'identity'; that this has both intellectual and political costs; and that we can do better" affirming it "tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense) or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)" (1).

Therefore, due to its lineage and popularity, identity is a difficult concept to define and another influence, postmodernism, has made this task even harder.

In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams states that culture is one of the most complex words to define, and I would suggest that in the 21st century, *identity* also could be considered in this light because the "postmodern turn" has changed how identities are conceptualized (76-77). That is to say, many consider postmodernity as "a decisive and radical shift to a postindustrial economy organized around culture and cultural consumption, the media, and information technology"[6] (Smith 214-215). It is characterized by fragmentation, hybridity, and a blurring of styles through the uses of collage, play, and pastiche (Smith 214-215; Harvey 39-65). It is because it is characterized by this "postmodern turn" of ideas and events that scholars have begun to question the notion of identity and its role within contemporary society with some suggesting that postmodernity and late capitalism have significantly altered the way that we envision ourselves to the point that the notion of a stable identity has become moot (Bauman 18-26). They also dispute over whether we can regard identity as relatively fixed or as continually changing in postmodern times (Woodward 11-12).

In other words, they argue that while it is true that we sometimes identify ourselves in terms of one social category—race, gender, class, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation—by foregoing another, scholars need to understand the complexity of how these multiple identities function in the realm of postmodernity with its fragmented,

[6] Rather than viewing postmodernity as a complete break with modernity, following Jameson, Brummett, and Harvey respectively, I argue that our contemporary period should be viewed as the extension of late capitalism in which you have an overlap of modern and postmodern features (Jameson 3; Brummett in Sullivan and Goldzwig 294; Harvey vii, 38-65).

yet pluralistic nature (Evans 99). As Carrie Crenshaw suggests in her work, "Resisting Whiteness' Rhetorical Silence," we need to analyze how social categories coincide, stressing that scholars must "investigate how these racialized constructions [such as whiteness] intersect with gender and class" because they function in tandem (254). Crenshaw seems to warn against essentializing identity based only upon one social categorization. In order to develop a more comprehensive view of how identity functions, it is necessary to map out or trace how these intersecting categories work in conjunction rather than viewing them as discrete entities.

For purposes of this project, I will provide a brief definition of identity that will inform the remainder of this work and be further addressed in chapter two. First, I will not distinguish between self-concept and identity as one necessarily informs the other. That it to say, the way that we view ourselves (which some label *self-concept*) necessarily informs how we present ourselves to others (which some label *identity*) and vice-versa. Therefore, I will consider them interchangeably defining *identity* as our process of being, becoming, or imagining that is, not only how we view ourselves, but also how we present ourselves to others and how they *identify* us (in Woodward 20-21). By the process word *identify*, I suggest that we attribute various identities to others and ourselves in the process of being, becoming, or imagining who we are or who we want to be as people.

Scholars Sarup and Raja explain that identity is "a construction, a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices…" (11). For this reason, I also will not distinguish between "personal identity" and "social identity" as they "should be conceived of as utterly entangled, for individual [or personal] identity depends on thinking with social tools and acting in social ways, whether reflexively or

unreflexively" (Edensor 24). Therefore, I will classify identity as being a "process" that is comprised of both personal and social aspects that are inherently linked (Edensor 24). Paralleling this definition, Richard Jenkins emphasizes that identity is a *fluid* social and cultural process of development in which we understand ourselves and others (3-5).

Following Jenkins' perspective, I will view identity as being fluid and unfixed because: "One's identity—one's identities, indeed for who we are is always singular and plural—is never a final or settled matter" (Jenkins 5). For example, we may be simultaneously a parent and a child, a student and a teacher, and/or a supervisor and subordinate. In constructing our identities, we also utilize social categories of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, and culture that sometimes function as *dimensions* of identity. Later in chapter two, I will further explore how these social categories relate to identity. Therefore, the definition that I will use for identity is *an ongoing process of being, becoming, or imagining in which we characterize ourselves in relation to others using symbolic and social practices* (Woodward 12). In using this broader definition, I also hope to demonstrate why identity politics need not be considered as solely rooted in a single category.

Closely related to identity is its relationship to representation because we may utilize various representations as role models to construct our identities. Especially now, images have become so prevalent in the cultural landscape that people seem more aware of how these images and representations can influence others.[7] In *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*, David Gauntlett proposes that people use popular cultural

[7] In chapter two, I will further address how mass media images shape our views of identities today.

representations like celebrities as role models defining them as people that we look up to and/or people that we base our own lives upon (209).

He argues that there are six different types of role models, however, I will just mention two here so that we can see how role models operate. One kind of role model he mentions is the 'wholesome' role model who is "clean-cut," upstanding, and generally displays behaviors that are socially acceptable. This type of role model is in contrast to another role model, the 'outsider,' who goes against the mainstream and does not conform to socially acceptable behavior. In fact, the 'outsider' role model goes out of his or her way to be controversial whether by being sexually explicit and/or displaying other forms of "bad" behavior (Gauntlett 214-215). For example, many teen girls use role models such as Hillary Duff (who can be labeled as 'wholesome') and Christina Aguilera (who can be labeled as an 'outsider') as models for their own behaviors or use these celebrities as guides for managing their identities. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, we often turn to these popular cultural representations to construct our own identities. Therefore, like teenage girls, we too may draw upon them as models for managing our own lives.

Gauntlett further states that mass media as discourse suggest 'ways of living' for people that closely parallels Kenneth Burke's view of "equipment for living" (Gauntlett 209; Burke, *Philosophy* 296). In other words, both Burke and Gauntlett argue that we use popular culture as guides for how to live our lives and it aids us in the process of creating our identities and how we view others. In this respect, we sometimes judge others based upon how they are represented within popular culture. We also attribute identities to other

people based upon representations and use these depictions in constructing our own identities in relation to theirs.

For example, before students enter college they often assess what "college life" will be like, how they should interact with others as a college student, and judge their future professors' personalities based upon movies such as *Animal House*, *School Daze*, and *Good Will Hunting*. Similarly, various characterizations and representations are repeatedly shown throughout different forms of popular culture that can be labeled according to types such as the "nerd," "jock," and/or "geek" images that proliferate many teen movies that range from *Revenge of the Nerds* to *Sixteen Candles* to *Ten Things I Hate About You*.

Stuart Hall stresses that one cannot study identity without also studying how these various identities are represented stating: "Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation" (in Hall and duGay 4). As such, scholars also contemplate whether representations of identities such as those seen on television, featured in magazines, and/or shown on the "big screen" actually influence how people regard themselves and others. They also question the extent to which these representations may or may not be accurate portrayals of various identities. In studying identity, then, it is necessary to analyze representations as these models may influence how people view themselves and others because "it is always within representation that we recognize ourselves" (Sarup and Raja 47). Further, the more identities are grounded in representations, the more fluid and changeable they become because representations are flexible and often change over time.

Another way that we recognize ourselves in representations and formulate our identities is through the use of performance, which has become another central issue for scholars. Because of the fluid nature of contemporary society and the destabilization of fixed categories, scholars consider how performance functions in the creation and management of identities. They question whether our identities are formed through our use of behaviors, language, and practices with some advocating that our identities do not exist outside of the performances of them (Butler 25). Scholars ponder whether or not people enact various roles within certain social situations or whether people essentially remain the same regardless of circumstances (Goffman 18-20). Some also claim that due to the widespread influence of mass media we largely view our lives in dramatic terms and now have more readily-available access to information about the various roles that people enact within our society (Gabler 233; Gozzi 4, 77; Meyrowitz, 33). To understand the rhetoric of identity as multifaceted, I propose that we adopt the perspective of polystylism and will now outline why the best way to view identity in contemporary society is as both communicative and rhetorical.[8]

THE NOTION OF POLYSTYLISM: WHY WE SHOULD VIEW IDENTITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION AND RHETORIC

As stated earlier, a focus on identity largely in terms of single category identity politics, or a binarist approach, is problematic because it presents an extreme view of identity, which does not account for the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon. One solution to this problem, I propose, is to use an alternative view for understanding

[8] In chapter two, I will more fully develop this notion of identity as a communicative and rhetorical

identity that is not limited to a one-dimensional perspective. Therefore, I offer the notion of polystylism[9] to suggest our identities are creations, have the potential for multiplicity, are malleable or changeable, and are both socially influenced and dependent. In addition, our creation of various identities should be viewed as steeped in communicative and rhetorical practices instead of being rooted in a single category or demographic. That is to say, we create and manage our identities rhetorically.

I believe that viewing identity as rhetorically-constructed will move beyond the SCIP approach by allowing us to account for changing social roles and categories as well as the influences of the postmodern turn, consumption, and the proliferation of mass media images. As Kenneth Burke explains in *A Rhetoric of Motives*: "…rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (43).

Therefore a rhetorical perspective can also provide insight into the "ordinary" or "everyday" aspects of life as Brummett posits in "Rhetorical Theory as Heuristic and Moral: A Pedagogical Justification": "Rhetorical theory addresses, or should address, action in real life rather than the store of scholarly knowledge and so the method for carrying it out or applying it is nothing more than the everyday real life actions of looking and hearing *with sensibilities sharpened by the theory*" (105). He also explains that rhetoric is "…a dimension of experience that underlies all sorts of experiences…" and

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practice.

identity, again, is one such way to organize "everyday" experiences ("Rhetorical" 105). Further, this perspective of identity as rhetorically-constructed is in direct opposition to the binarist approach because rhetoric by its very nature allows for a multiplicity of meanings and a questioning of how those meanings are constructed in the first place.

By viewing identity as communicative and rhetorical, scholars can move beyond the traditional arguments that have surrounded SCIP over the last few decades. Instead of getting mired in the debate of whether or not we should study identity politics, this perspective will enable us view the relationship between identity and politics in all of its complexities instead of limiting it to a skirmish over binary oppositions or rooting it within a single category. A continuous argument over the validity of identity politics does not allow for other "ways of seeing" and as Kenneth Burke indicates may lead to a trained incapacity (*Permanence* 7). A complex view of identity is also more useful in the sense that it allows us to analyze identity in all of its varied facets and does not obscure or overlook crucial issues. Therefore, I claim that in order to more fully understand how identity functions we need to see why it is communicative and specifically how people use it rhetorically.

This alternative perspective also will allow us to view a fuller range of identity and how identity functions, not only politically, but also culturally, socially, and materially. As stated earlier, I advocate that the issue of identity is more complex than focusing on one aspect as various categories intersect (race, class, gender, age, and other social labels)

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[9] As stated earlier, I am borrowing and adapting this term from the field of music.

in its formulation. Therefore, this perspective will aid us in exploring a more holistic view of identity while avoiding the fixation commonly associated with SCIP.

One reason that the discipline of rhetoric is particularly well-suited to addressing identity and issues surrounding it its grounding in language because matters of identity often are rooted within language as Mary Bernstein reveals: "Examining how groups are represented in language and images may help explain how beliefs about those groups are constructed. In a media-driven culture, such analyses become especially important" ("Identity Politics" 64). Because of this foundation in understanding how language functions, rhetoric also is key to understanding how we create and manage our identities through the use of language.

As Roderick Hart also acknowledges: "To understand the power of rhetoric we must remember that creatures and noncreatures alike…are born without labels…No doubt, naming is as important as it is because meaning is such a variable thing" (16). In other words, we use language as a means of categorizing and constructing our world and to enact change in our various situations within it including how we view ourselves and others. Thus, if we can discover how language functions or if we change our use of language, we can change our identities and world because language has such a profound impact on life as we know it.

Viewing identity as communicative and rhetorical also is the best way to understand identity due to the nature of language itself in its playfulness, slipperiness, and ambiguity to shape how we make sense of various identities. By *language*, I mean both the verbal and nonverbal signs that we use as a means of communicating with others. At this point,

some would argue that a reliance on language could cause us to fall into the trap of binary oppositions because when we define terms we do so by naming what they are not and call forth their opposites. This reliance on language, in other words, might suggest a return to binary oppositions, which in turn leads us back to essentialist, single category identity politics.

However, I argue that language also holds within it the potential to traverse or transcend those binary oppositions and allows for a multiplicity of meanings such that it has linguistic flexibility and resourcefulness so that language is not simply concrete. As Michel Foucault states in his work *The Order of Things*: "…real language is not a totality of independent signs, a uniform and unbroken entity in which things could be reflected by one, as in a mirror, and so express their particular truths. It is rather an opaque, mysterious thing…"(34). In other words, one of the ways we create and manage identity is through the employment of language so it is necessary to utilize a perspective that can fully address how this language usage functions. Further, the ways in which we describe various identities rely on our characterizations of identity, which also are steeped in language, yet never entirely fixed notions.

Kenneth Burke, in *Language as Symbolic Action,* underlines the transformational nature of language in its slipperiness and playfulness. He seems to advocate that changes in terminology can change our perspectives and that language itself necessarily allows these changes to be able to occur. Identity also can be considered transformational in the sense that we can evoke a change in terminology to change our perspectives of identity. He also points to the resourcefulness of language believing that language is the tool we

have for surviving in a world of ambiguities explaining: "It will thus be seen that, in playing the game of life, we have at our command a resource whereby we can shift the rules of this game" (*Philosophy* 130-131). Further, the transformational quality of language, according to Burke, emphasizes that we are always in a state of becoming something else and that there is always the potential to change a situation. This parallels my earlier definition of identity in which we are always in a state of being, becoming, or imagining who we are or want to be and that this process is ongoing. Language also provides us with the resources to enact change. In other words, Burke reveals that we can work against the structure of piety by being impious through our recharacterizations of situations (*Permanence* 85). Likewise, we can utilize language as a resource to manipulate our identities or recharacterize them depending on the social situations in which we find ourselves. Therefore, using the perspective of rhetoric allows us flexibility in how we understand identity because it addresses the fundamental problems of naming and the use of discourses to create meaning.

A key failure of the binarist approach seems to be a failure in naming because it heavily relies on both the use of binary oppositions in the extreme as well as treating identity as deriving from a single category that becomes essentialized or naturalized as true. Utilizing a rhetorical perspective to analyze identity, therefore, would allow us to better understand how this process of naming occurs within our various discourses as well as the influence that these discourses might have on how we create and manage our identities. Foucault argues that discourses create the objects of which they speak showing how discourses create practices declaring: "But one would soon realize that each of these

discourses in turn, constituted its object and worked it to the point of transforming it altogether" (*Archaeology* 32). In this sense, he asserts that discourse "appears as an asset- finite, limited, desirable, useful- that has its own rules of appearance, but also its own conditions of appropriation and operation; an asset that consequently, from the moment of its existence, poses the question of power; an asset that is, by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle" (*Archaeology* 120).

Although identity in contemporary society is a complex issue, it nevertheless is one that is rooted within various discourses. As Roderick Hart explains: "…these [kinds of] situations require the use of language and all of them can result in both obvious and non-obvious forms of influence" (11). Matters of identity, therefore, are constituted and shaped within the discourses that arise surrounding them. As Richard Cherwitz and James Hikin reveal in *Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology*: "…whenever humans include with discourses (whether scientific, political, philosophical, or other) characterizations of reality asserted through language, there is the possibility of persuasion"(63). Rhetoric, therefore, can aid in our understanding of how these discourses surrounding identity function as "sites of struggle" within society.

Viewing identity as communicative and rhetorical will also help us to understand how identity and discourses surrounding it can be used as a form of persuasion or influence within society as well as how people employ their identities strategically. As Cherwitz and Hikin insist: "…we contend that any discourse that invites or demands its audience to see that world in a certain specified way is potentially persuasive and

therefore must be denominated rhetorical" (64). Believing that language is a form of symbolic action, Kenneth Burke underlines language's connection to motives believing that we employ certain terminologies to describe what we believe are our motives and those of others stating: "for if we know *why* people do as they do, we feel that we know *what* to expect of them and of ourselves and we shape our decisions and judgments and policies to take such expectancies into account" (*Permanence* 18). Thus, viewing identity as communicative and rhetorical will allow us to see how people use it strategically and underline their motives for doing so.

Utilizing a rhetorical perspective also enables us to get at the heart of a key aspect of human relationships because we can examine how identities and the discourses surrounding them are used in our process of meaning-making. As Barry Brummett avows in the *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*: "There is a function that must be performed in any social and political arrangement: the creation, management, and alteration or opposition of shared meanings. This function is carried out both intentionally and unintentionally. Without that function, no shared social life is possible, because both public and private decisions are based on commonly held meanings"(38).

Paralleling this view, in *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*, Stuart Hall asserts: "As well as being social animals, men and women are also *cultural* beings. And as cultural beings, we are all, always; irrevocably immersed in this 'sea of meaning' in this giving-and-taking of meaning which we call 'culture'" from which he believes we cannot escape (in duGay, 14). Because culture influences how we create meanings, it is necessary to include this aspect within our studies of identity. Further, the

cultural, social, political, material, and rhetorical blend into and influence each other in the creation of identities. To capture the most in-depth perspective about this particular facet of life, we thereby need to examine all aspects of it and a rhetorical perspective will allow us to do so.

Finally, viewing identity as communicative and rhetorical will elucidate the political potential of identity as a form of social struggle that is communicated through various discursive channels. In other words, identity can be considered to have a rhetorical dimension because claims of identity seem to be forms of influence with political and social implications that are sometimes not as overt as other forms of political practice. In *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*, Barry Brummett states rhetoric is "the social function that influences and manages meaning" (xii). Roderick Hart, in *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* defines rhetoric as "the art of using language to help people narrow their choices among specifiable, if not specified policy options" (2).

Fusing these two notions, we can define rhetoric as a form of influence rooted in the social realm that helps to shape and construct our perceptions of the world socially, culturally, and politically which, in turn, impacts those choices that we make within it. Thus, this definition will be useful to us in viewing how identity is a form of rhetoric that has political dimensions because how we present ourselves to others involves choices, but these choices also are sometimes socially constrained. Additionally, as one of the goals for the field of rhetoric is to discern and analyze contemporary social and political issues, then it would seem fitting to further delve into the notion of identity as it would fall within the "function and scope" of rhetorical theory and criticism (Bryant 15-37). Now, I will preview of the remainder of the dissertation.

SCOPE AND FUNCTION OF THE DISSERTATION: POLYSTYLISM:

A FUSION OF IDENTITY, RHETORIC, & SOCIAL STYLE

As suggested earlier, I assert that identity today is largely a rhetorical and communicative practice, which I will develop further in chapter two. For the purposes of this dissertation, the construct that I will use that most clearly expresses how identity functions rhetorically in the 21st century is s*ocial style*. Social style is how we employ a *system of signs* comprised of performance, use of language, commodities, and aesthetics to create our identities, present ourselves to others, and is the means by which we identify people or label them according to social categories. It is the best way for us to view identity as rhetorical because the use of social style can be considered as *strategic*. In other words, social style will allow us to see how our identities are formulated, manipulated, and maintained according to the various social resources and practices at our disposal.

This dissertation will illustrate how we use strategies to communicate with others in social situations and to make sense of the communication of others in those situations. Style has taken on an increased significance today as Stuart Ewen, in *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* contends style is an element found in each facet of our lives ranging from the social to the economic (23). Further, the realm of social style is one of the key ways that people create and manage their identities within contemporary society such that our use of style has taken on a more important role in our identity formations. Thus, it seems likely that one of the key foci of identity in the 21st

century is the relationship that it has to how we employ various styles and it is for that reason that social style needs to be further addressed in scholarly study.

To further discern this relationship, I will extend Brummett's definition of rhetoric and demonstrate how it is a social function that not only manages, *but also creates meaning (Rhetorical Dimensions* xii). We will see that this creation of meaning in developing identity is presented *through the use of signs*—commodities, behaviors, performances, etc.—that convey various social styles (*Rhetorical Dimensions* xii). I also will explore how people employ social style to constitute identities within American society. Specifically, I will examine how our contemporary identities are intrinsically linked to the social styles that we have or how we represent ourselves using social style.[10] Thus, in the dissertation I will delve into how social style is inherently communicative and rhetorical, and especially today, style seems to be where identity is created, managed, and struggled over.

In chapter two, I will provide a more detailed outlook on how identity functions as a communicative and rhetorical practice and why it should be labeled as "polystylistic" in contemporary times. I also will explain how social style helps to create our identities by demonstrating that there are four dimensions of social style that create identity which are 1) performance, 2) use of language, 3) commodities, and 4) aesthetics. I recommend that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive as they sometimes overlap, that within given texts we may find one or a combination of these dimensions, and that sometimes

[10] I do not propose that in the past people did not use style to create their identities, as scholars have demonstrated this relationship certainly existed historically. However, I will examine how this use of style in contemporary society may have changed, meaning that the ability to construct identities seems more fluid and not as constrained by class status as it was in the past.

one dimension will be more dominant than others. Hence, I will identify how we create our styles through the use of commodities as signs, our performances of specific behaviors and language, and that linked to these aspects is our use of aesthetics. Further, in chapter three, I will outline the methodology of rhetorical homologies of personae that will be utilized in this dissertation by suggesting that we use social categories as a means of labeling the ways that social style operates.

Moreover, by viewing our usage of social styles to create identity as strategic, I also will address identity's potential as a form of politics. Remember, I suggested that politics in the 21st century could be considered as a site of struggle in discourse. Therefore, in examining social style, I also will uncover how identity is constituted, maintained, and manipulated in society and how these identities are fought over or contested within our everyday lives with both political and social implications. However, a focus on social style also allows for a complex view of identity that avoids a one-dimensional focus on single category identity politics.

In Part Two of the dissertation, I will apply the theoretical and methodological frameworks discussed in Part One to various texts ranging from a transgender text, Buck Angel, to political figures such as John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush to demonstrate that the construction of identity is carried out within various kinds of social and political practices.

Overall, it is hoped that this dissertation will help us to better comprehend how the proliferation of mass mediated images and heightened consumption has influenced the creation and management of our identities in the 21st century. Grounded in the fields of communication, rhetoric, and cultural studies, it will provide a rationale for viewing

identity as created by social styles and will explain how today identity is both communicative and rhetorical. It also will offer a theoretical and methodological framework for analyzing how people use social styles to create and manage their identities. Finally, while some argue that identity lacks political relevance and that in the postmodern turn there is a lack of meaning, it is hoped that this dissertation will demonstrate the political potential of identity and illustrate that it is one of *the* key ways that people create meaning today. For as Judith Butler reveals, "The deconstruction of identity is not the destruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated" (148). Now, I turn to an outline of the dissertation chapters.

Dissertation Chapter Outline

PART ONE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

In part one, the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the dissertation are outlined that will inform the remainder of the dissertation.

Chapter One: Introduction-Viewing Identity as One-Dimensional, or The Problem with a Single Category Identity Politics (SCIP) Approach

Chapter Two: Identity Matters: Moving Beyond Single Category Identity Politics, (SCIP), to Polystylistic Identity by Characterizing the Rhetoric of Social Style

In chapter two, I assert that identity, especially in contemporary times, is both communicative and rhetorical by beginning with an overview of this new perspective of identity. Drawing upon the fields of rhetoric, communication, and critical/cultural studies, in chapter two, a theoretical framework also is developed to outline how social style can be regarded as *the* key way that we create polystylistic identities in contemporary society. It outlines four dimensions upon which social style creates identity which are performance, use of language, commodification, and aesthetics. It also will elucidate that underlying these dimensions is politics and will give examples of how the rhetorical performance of social style has social and political implications because it is a site of struggle in everyday life.

Chapter Three: Rhetorical Homologies of Personae: Methodologically Discerning Identity as The Rhetoric of Social Style

To prove whether the theory of polystylism is feasible, chapter three details the methodological framework of rhetorical homology that will be utilized for this

dissertation and will outline the steps one would undertake to analyze identity using this approach. First, I will outline the theory of rhetorical homology and explain why it can be applied to the study of identity. Then, I will devise my methodological approach that augments Brummett's original theory by focusing on rhetorical homologies of personae and fuse this scope with the theory of polystylism and work of scholar Dick Hebdige. Next, I will outline the kinds of texts that one would need to look at to undertake this kind of study providing a brief example of the method at work. Finally, I conclude by previewing the two applications chapters and offer a rationale for why they are appropriate texts to study in analyzing how identity is manifested through the use of social styles.

PART TWO: ILLUSTRATIONS/ APPLICATION CHAPTERS

In part two, I will utilize the theoretical and methodological frameworks developed in part one to illustrate how social style creates identity within various forms of popular culture that range from a transgendered text to political figures. Part two also provides the overall conclusions that will be drawn about how social style creates identity in the 21st century as well as the rhetorical and political implications this may have within society.

Chapter Four: A Transgressing Social Style: Buck Angel—"The Man with a Pussy"

To explore how identity creation is a personal issue that often has political implications, Chapter four will examine a transgender text, "Buck Angel," a transgender person who lives his life as a man, yet is genetically-defined as a woman to analyze how transgendered persons create and manage their identities through the use of social styles, physical transformations, and rhetorical homologies of personae. Using a *micro* perspective, moving from social style to a rhetorical homology of persona, I argue that in

creating his social style and identity Buck Angel draws upon the "hyper-masculine" cultural persona of a biker outlaw, yet he disrupts the rigid binary cultural norms surrounding sexuality and gender by unsettling notions of masculinity, femininity, sexual orientation, and desire. Thus, his identity construction provides evidence for polystylism because he allows space for play, fluidity, multiplicity, and more complex views of social categories in the practice of creating identities. Finally, I will discuss the social and political implications of Buck Angel and how this identity calls into question the degree to which our performances of identity can be both culturally-constrained, yet fluid.

Chapter Five: Masks of Privilege, Masks of Labor: WASPing and De-WASPing as Rhetorical and Political Strategies of Identity

While chapter four presents a more "extreme" view of identity construction that is limited to a smaller group of people, chapter five presents a "mainstream" view of how identity construction functions through the use of social style. In this chapter, I will move from a *macro* perspective of rhetorical homologies of personae to a micro perspective of social style. I will discuss how social style possesses fluidity and demonstrate how the process of WASPing and De-WASPing often is used as a rhetorical and political strategy to create identity. It will compare two political figures, George W. Bush and John F. Kennedy to show how politicians, to obtain political power and clout, utilize a strategy of WASP-ing or De-WASPing to create a political identity. Finally, it will try to outline how various groups or individuals may employ a process similar to this strategy when trying to identify with and/or distance themselves from others.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications

Ch. 2: Identity Matters: Moving Beyond Single Category Identity Politics, (SCIP), to Polystylistic Identity by Characterizing the Rhetoric of Social Style

> "In the modern era, identity is always constructed and situated in a field amid a flow of contending cultural discourses."
> "But something seems qualitatively new to the problems of both individual and collective identity and the problem of relating to each other across lines of differences in the modern world"Craig Calhoun— *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*

Identity, according to Richard Jenkins can be considered "…the most mundane of things and it can be most extraordinary" (Jenkins 3). While possibly mundane, I propose that the ways in which people construct "who they are," "who they are becoming," or who they want to be may be at the heart of how people create and manage meaning today that has both social and political implications (Jenkins 5). However, as I argued in the previous chapter, scholars need an alternative theoretical and methodological perspective for the study of identity that does not succumb to the trappings of binarist identity politics like regarding identity as one-dimensional or grounded in a single category.

Proposing the theory of polystylism, I suggested that this perspective would allow scholars to further delve into profound issues surrounding identity and how it currently functions as form of influence. Therefore, I assert that one way to avoid the simplistic SCIP approach to identity is to consider it as both a communicative and rhetorical practice that is a "site of struggle" in contemporary society (Fiske, *Reading* 5-6). Specifically, to further understand identity beyond the SCIP scope, I argue that *style* is the best way to view identity as a complex phenomenon because style is complex and it is within the realm of style that we create and manage meanings about our identities today.

In chapter one, I mainly sought to demonstrate the various flaws of an SCIP approach. Extending this argument, I begin this chapter by explaining how we can move beyond SCIP and instead view identity as a communicative and rhetorical practice. Next,

I assert that because of the influences of postmodernism, changing social roles, heightened consumption, and the proliferation of mass media images, the best way to view our identities as complex, versus the SCIP approach, is to examine how people use *social style*, or the use of performance, language, commodities, and aesthetics to create their identities. Specifically, I will maintain that our contemporary identities are intrinsically linked to the social styles that we have or how we represent ourselves using social style. Further, I will assert that this creation and maintenance of identity through the use of social style is inherently rhetorical and political. I, then, define social style by outlining its four dimensions, explaining how these dimensions rhetorically operate together, and provide some brief examples of identity as created through the use of social style throughout this section. Finally, I will conclude with a preview of the methodology that further will be explained in chapter three.

HOW IDENTITY IS A COMMUNICATIVE AND RHETORICAL PRACTICE

Although the concept of identity is not uniformly regarded as an issue of communication or rhetoric, I believe that viewing it as such will be a fruitful endeavor as it will help us to see how it functions in contemporary society as a "site of struggle" as well as avoiding the pitfall of framing it largely in terms of binarist identity politics. Throughout the dissertation, I will regard identity as a "communicative practice" in which we use verbal and nonverbal signs to identify ourselves to others (Carbaugh 7). Specifically, I will investigate how the notion of identity relates to rhetoric by viewing it as a process in which we symbolically and socially make sense of who we are based upon our discursive practices, lived experiences, and relationships to others which also seems to be a fluid process that continually changes.

I propose *four* ways that identity is communicative and rhetorical which are as follows: 1) Identity communicates who we are, who we are becoming, and who we want

to be; 2) Identity is performative; 3) Identities are based on identification to align ourselves with and against others; and 4) Identities are utilized strategically in social situations. This alternative view is contrary to a binarist approach to identity because it regards identity as an ever-changing and evolving process, avoids fixing or essentializing social categories, does not utilize rigid binaries as a means of labeling or naming identities, and allows for a multiplicity and fluidity of both identity and the various social categories that constitute it. Further, viewing identity, as a communicative and rhetorical practice will allow us to analyze how identity is *still* a site of politics, yet does not have to be limited to SCIP.

1) Identity communicates who we are, who we are becoming, and who we want to be

Michael Hecht in his article "2002 A Research Odyssey—Toward the Development of a Communication Theory of Identity" argues, "identity is inherently a communicative process and must be understood as a transaction in which messages are exchanged" that are "symbolic linkages between and among people" (Jenkins 3; Hecht 78.) In other words, identity is the means by which people communicate who they are and influences social relationships because people utilize identity to align themselves with and/or against others.

Kenneth Burke also views human interaction as a symbolic action in which people are agents who act according to their motives and he asserts this action can be viewed in dramatic terms (*A Grammar* xv-xii) Labeling his theory, dramatism, he claims that people are like actors on a stage in which they create the roles they choose to perform and play through the use of language and identification (Burke, *A Grammar* xv-xxii). He further submits that if scholars employ his method of pentadic analysis (act,

scene, agent, agency, and purpose), they will be able to discover the key motives in any given scenario (Burke, *A Grammar* xv-xiii).

Following Burke's perspective, Donal Carbaugh proposes that we view humans as agents that construct their identities through communication in various social scenes (9). Utilizing ethnographic research he suggests that one of the ways in which people create meaning for themselves is through "their situated symbolic practices" within social scenes (Carbaugh 13). He declares that we can, therefore, consider identity as a form of discourse in which people are positioned according to how they communicate within social scenes acknowledging: "In short, each discursive practice simultaneously positions, within sociocultural discourses, its producer as well as the recipients of those messages" (Carbaugh 141-142).

Identity also can be considered communicative because it is a form of discourse or narrative that operates within daily life. Michael Hecht explains: "Identities are codes that are expressed in conversations and define membership in communities"; "Identities have semantic properties that are expressed in core symbols, meanings, and labels"; and "Identities prescribe modes of appropriate and effective communication" (79). He therefore suggests that identity communicates, not only who we are, but also sometimes prescribes how we should act in being or becoming those people. In other words, throughout society there seem to be various codes or prescriptions for how one should act if he or she is defined according to certain terms.

For example, a defense attorney in a courtroom is expected to engage in behaviors that govern the court of law such as demonstrating respect to the judge and jury, speaking at appropriate times, and dressing professionally. She is not supposed to speak out of turn, testify for her witnesses, scream profanities at the judge, or arrive in court dressed in jeans and a T-shirt. If she did, she could be subject to contempt of court, be fired, or

possibly be disbarred depending on the offense. Additionally, if she were to engage in any of the above acts that are not prescribed modes of appropriate communication, it is likely that she would lose her position as an attorney.

In contemporary society, Douglas Kellner maintains that the way we create identity is through the use of discursive codes citing: "…identities are constructed by the appropriation of images, and codes and models determine how individuals perceive themselves and relate to other people" (8). These codes function sometimes in the form of binary oppositions (such as black and white, up and down, etc.) that serve to create dichotomies between various groups of people. As stated earlier, we must note that the binaries have a hierarchal relationship such that one part of the binary is privileged in its relationship to the other (Woodward 36). However, the codes also can function in terms of similarities between people such as in the concept of "identification" which is crucial to understanding how identity functions rhetorically.

In turn, we sometimes consider ourselves along these lines discursively when we try to make sense of or explain ourselves to others through narratives. In *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*, Madan Sarup and Tasneem Raja state that we can view identity as a form of narrative in which our identities are formulated through a process of labeling others and ourselves as well as created based upon our current and past actions (14-15). Sarup and Raja maintain that we work out who we are in the process of sharing our narratives with others—that is to say, "we construct our identity at the same time as we tell our life-story" (15). For instance, if someone defines himself as an animal-rights supporter in telling others about his identity he may include stories about how he adopts pets from the local animal shelter and refuses to buy products that depend on animal testing.

Yet, they underline that in the construction process, we leave out some things that "must not be said" and so, "What is important in identity is not only what it cannot say, but also what it cannot be" (Sarup and Raja 24). They seem to suggest that we create our identities based upon limited resources and that we choose to focus on some aspects of our identities versus others. In other words, when a person talks to her mother about how well she is doing in college, she may only focus on how well she is doing academically and not on the fact that she is not adjusting socially. Therefore, in telling her narrative she creates and communicates the identity of a successful student scholar.

2) Identity is performative[11]

Scholar Erving Goffman conducted one of the first studies on performance in his work *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Goffman's main argument is that we create who we are, or want to be, to others in ways that vary according to the social situations in which we find ourselves and whether we are in public or private (18-20). He discloses that in our presentations of self, we use various settings, appearances, and manners to create a "front" for our performances and are socialized into our roles based upon our interactions with others stating: " When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it" (Goffman 23-27). Not only do we enact roles, we behave in certain ways according to these roles and the region or "any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers of perception" in which we find ourselves (Goffman 106).

Goffman states that in the front or public regions of our lives, we are "onstage" and it is in this space that we try to enact behaviors that adhere to particular standards of conduct for that given role in interacting with others (107). Contrary to the front region,

[11] Later in this chapter, I further will explore how performativity operates in the use of styles to create our identities.

the back region, or private area, is the space in which a person can relax separately from the audience and is a space in which a performer can prepare for his or her front region performances (Goffman 113). He determines that most people take significant measures to keep these two regions separate because otherwise their behaviors may seem inconsistent (Goffman138). Thus, Goffman discloses that any situation will be defined by the roles that participants play, how consistent these are to pre-established roles, and how well participants interact in these performances (17-76, 106-140).

Following and extending Goffman's work, Joshua Meyrowitz, in *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* argues that because media act as an "information-system," the divisions between public and private space are becoming blurred (52,71). Meyrowitz also insists that media have actually created new social situations that are not as bound by the rigid separations of public and private and/or time and space as Goffman earlier proposed (xi, 115). As a result, our social roles have also changed with the creation of new identities that are more fluid such as the blurring between masculinity and femininity, childhood and adulthood, and viewing the political figure as a "regular person" (Meyrowitz 185-304). Thus, Meyrowitz foreshadows features of what scholars label "postmodern" identities concluding: "Evolution in media, I have suggested, has changed the logic of social order by restructuring the relationship between physical place and social place and by altering the ways in which we transmit and receive social information" (307). In this sense, he also categorizes our various identities as created through our performances of them.

3) Identities are based on identification to align ourselves with and against others

Identity, according to Kathryn Woodward has the following characteristics: 1) It is "relational, and difference is established by symbolic marking in relation to others" where some differences are "obscured" 2) Both the symbolic, "how we make sense of

social relations and practices" and the social, how our differences are "lived out," are necessary for the creation of identities; 3) It involves a system of classification to demonstrate social relationships; and 4) "Identities are not unified" (12). In other words, our identities are created through the use of identification.

Kenneth Burke, in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, proclaims: "you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his" (55). He contends that although A is not identical to B, he may view himself as being so if he perceives their interests are the same or if he "is persuaded to believe so" (Burke, *A Rhetoric* 20). In using identification, a person tries to identify with or find the commonalities that exist between she and another person. Burke's argument is that the process of identification is rhetorical; that is to say, that we strategically align ourselves with others for various purposes (Burke, *A Rhetoric* 19-22; 55-59).

Correspondingly, Stuart Hall advocates that perhaps instead of using the term "identity," we should use the term "identification" to analyze how people align themselves with and/or against others in social relations (in Hall and duGay 2). He views identification as begin comprised of a sense of commonality on the one hand, without the complete erasure of difference, suggesting: "Like all signifying practices it is subject to the 'play' of différance" (in Hall and duGay 3). Finally, Hall asserts that "Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by enunciative strategies" (in Hall and duGay 4).

4) Identities are utilized strategically in situations

The strategies that we use to influence others in the process of communicating seem to be of crucial importance because this may determine how we function as a

society. A number of recent scholars also have suggested that identity is fundamentally rhetorical. As Richard Jenkins indicates, "Identifying ourselves or others is a matter of meaning" and from this we can infer that identity also may be a form of *meaning-making*. Correspondingly, Barry Brummett, avows: "Whatever creates and manages meaning, whatever influences people, whatever results in power gained or lost through signs and symbols is therefore considered to have a rhetorical dimension" and I will view identity in this light (*Rhetoric* 23).

Mary Bernstein in "Identity Politics" argues the most effective way to view identity is to view it as a strategy labeling it as "identity deployment" (61). Citing her 1997 work, she explains that:

> … identities are deployed strategically as a form of collective action to change institutions; to transform mainstream culture, its categories, and values, and perhaps by extension its policies and structures; to transform participants; or simply to educate legislators or the public. As a political strategy, identity deployment means expressing identity such that the terrain of conflict becomes the individual person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become subject to debate (61-62).

While she discusses this as related to political activism, I want to expand this to include how we interact with others in general. In other words, we often use our identities to align with or against others, not only as a form of collective political struggle, but often this can be considered a part of our ordinary or everyday tactics (DeCerteau in Highmore 73, 68-71).

I also put forth that as a part of this identity deployment we are able to utilize our identities as strategies in various social and political situations when we try to align ourselves with or against others. As Roderick Hart recognizes, in *Modern Rhetorical Criticism*, by participating in the process of communication people "open themselves up to each other's influence. In that sense, communication is not something that is *done* to

others. Rather, it is something that people *choose* to do to themselves by consenting to communicative contact" (emphasis added 7-8). Identity as a form of communication is one that can be considered to possess a strategic leaning since people employ their identities as a strategy in order to communicate with others. Further, our presentations of self are often based on our choices, as most of us are not forced to act in a particular way even if we are somewhat socially constrained. Yet aside from being a strategic communicative and rhetorical practice, I argue that contra SCIP our identities today are complex and that the best way to understand them as such is to examine the realm of style. Now, I turn to some reasons why our identities are more complex and why we can better understand this complexity by analyzing style.

WHY IDENTITY TODAY IS COMPLEX AND MANAGED WITHIN STYLE

While the SCIP approach would argue that our identities largely stem from inherent qualities rooted within a single category and are static, I assert that our identities today are more complex and fluid than they were fifty years ago. Due to the influences of the "postmodern turn" in scholarly study, changing social roles, the rise of mass media, and a heightened consumption, I argue that our identities increasingly have become constituted within the realm of style and it is within style that we can see how identities are communicative and rhetorical practices that are a site of political and social struggle today. Therefore, I begin with a brief overview of each of these influences and how they link to the domain of style.

Considering our contemporary time as a complete break with the tenets of modernity, many scholars argue that the "postmodern turn" drastically causes us to reshape how we consider our identities (Smith 214-215). They claim that we are in a period of the deconstruction of social categories and the grand narratives of the past (Lyotard 60). Instead of these grand categories of the past, there are a proliferation of

media images and consumption. Life, therefore, is fragmented and schizophrenic (Smith 214-215). Our identities, in turn, also are characterized by fragmentation and as a result our social roles and the categories that constitute them are more fluid.

In creating these postmodern selves, scholars also consider identity as rooted within collective social categories such as gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and class. Karen Cerulo points out in "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions" that the "holy trinity" of race, class, and gender has been at the forefront of scholarly work stating: "…identity studies have been relocated to the site of the collective, with gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class forming the 'holy trinity' of the discursive field... Writings attend, in particular, to that which constitutes a collective and the political implications that result from collective definitions" (386). Scholars, therefore, offer a variety of perspectives on how these social categories function in the creation of identities and representations of those identities ranging from viewing gender to sexual orientation to class (E.g. van Zoonen, 1992; Cohen, 1991; and Bullock, Wyche, and Williams, 2001). As argued in chapter one, some SCIP scholars consider these categories as stable and rigid such that a person's identity is mainly rooted within the predominant social category to which he or she belongs. However, due to the proliferation of mass media images and heightened consumption identities are not only more complex because they are created through multiple social categories, they also are managed stylistically.

Perhaps more than anything else, mass media with its proliferation of images has changed *the way* that we view ourselves by causing more focus on aspects of the visual in everyday life such that people seem more aware of how our identities influence others and the main way that they do so is by using style[12]. This awareness also leads people to

[12] Later in this chapter, I will explain how style functions in more detail.

mass media representations for role models upon whom they can base their own identities and styles. As Neal Gabler, in *Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality*, upholds one of the main ways that people create their identities is based on movie stars or celebrities (143-191). One result of this new awareness of self-presentations, according to Gabler, is that we rely on media for our role models. He puts forth: "The movies offered a menu of so many gestures, so many poses, so many attitudes, so many expressions, so many lines that if one chose, one could, observed critic Geoffrey O'Brien, 'end up adopting a whole life'"(196).

In *Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth*, Paula Cohen makes a similar point stating that the film industry and star system contribute to people's notions of self. She offers that in the 20th century stars began to be seen as role models because: "They offered lessons not only on how to feel but also on how to be" (132, 156). Stars are famous, not only for their achievements, but also for their use of styles to create their identities as Cohen contends: "Because movie stars expressed style through visual means, elements of their style could be appropriated by their fans. This helps to explain why a modern consumer society and the phenomenon of the star system evolved together" (156).

This star or celebrity fascination also spills over into the realm of television and it is television that scholars believe most influences Americans' views of identities. Greg Cross reveals that television became the center of American family life stating: "The TV became a family member—a baby sitter, a welcomed guest, and sometimes even an annoying relative" (155). But, television serves another function as it encourages America's fascination with the visual and consumption through the use of advertising (Cross 156). Cross states that TV is the most important "admakers' pipeline into the home" becoming " nearly a perfect celebration of suburban life" because: "It reinforced

the trend (established by radio) of homebound privacy and a national, even global, entertainment culture" (156).

As the accomplice of television, many scholars argue that advertising also has a huge influence on how people view themselves as Roland Marchand states: "Certainly few images have buffeted the consciousness of twentieth-century Americans as repetitively as advertisements" (xx). In *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Marchand proclaims that advertising began in the 1920s and "contributed to the shaping of a 'community of discourse,' an integrated common language shared by an otherwise diverse audience" that continues to this day (xx). In other words, mass media and advertising heightens people's awareness of how identities are created as well as causing people to rely heavily on visuals such as consumer goods in order to manage their identities and styles.

Along with the proliferation of mass media images, the rise in consumption has a profound impact on how people create and view their identities stylistically because they are able to purchase goods as a means of establishing various components of their identities such as class. Sociologist Thorstein Veblen, in his work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, argues that one of the dominant means of class status is the accumulation of wealth and that people struggle in order to gain more wealth, but also to compete with other people so as to "outdo" their associates (25-32). His theory of conspicuous consumption—that a consumer's ability, not only to purchase goods, but also to waste—is a sign of status (73-75). Veblen's theory can help us to understand how due to an increase in the availability of goods, department stores in which to buy them, and the use of credit, the more possessions a person could own demonstrates the class to which he belongs and he constitutes this part of his identity by employing these material goods stylistically. Further, if a person had the luxury to waste goods this ability demonstrates

that she is wealthier than others. This theory also foreshadows the rise of the "consumer society" which many argue characterizes how we create our identities today (Baudrillard *The Consumer Society* 193).

As Jean Baudrillard suggests in "Consumer Society": "We have reached the point where 'consumption' has grasped the whole of life…" (in Glickman 37). Our purchases of goods permeate other facets of our lives ranging from our daily activities to our identities. Our relationship to goods also has changed in the sense that once we used to purchase goods for their use value, but now more and more we purchase them because of their meanings as Baudrillard attests: "…the object is no longer referred to in relations to a specific utility, but as a collection of objects in their total meaning" that is signified (35).

As Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood discern this is because goods or commodities "carry social meanings" and "are needed for making visible and stable the categories of culture" (38). Celia Lury, in her work *Consumer Culture*, also finds "…goods are a means of making visible and stable the basic categories by which we classify people in society. Goods thus act as sources of social identity and bearers of social meaning" (13-14). In other words, as Lury explains we need to move beyond viewing consumption simply in terms of production and consumption arguing that the act of using or appropriating a good is "more than not both a moment of consumption *and* production, of undoing *and* doing, of destruction *and* construction" (1). Thus, people are able to use a myriad of consumer goods that were not as readily-available in the past and style is the *central* way that we can analyze how our identities, as complex communicative and rhetorical practices, are created and managed as sites of political and social struggle. Specifically, I now turn in depth to examining the *social styles* that we have and how we employ them in our interactions with others to constitute our identities.

WHAT IT SOCIAL STYLE?

Broadly defined, *style* has numerous meanings such as "writing," "a manner of expression," "a method or custom of performing actions or functions," "a kind, sort or type, as determined by manner of composition or construction or by outward appearance," and/or "a manner of executing or performing a task, an action, or operation" to name a few (Oxford Universal Dictionary 2053). Stuart Ewen, in *All-Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, explains that although it is discussed in numerous areas ranging from art to architecture to everyday life, style is hard to define because it "deals in surface impressions…It forms a chimerical, yet highly visible corridor between the world of things and human consciousness" (22). He argues that style is " a way that the human values, structures, and assumptions in a given society are aesthetically expressed and received," that is "…something intangible yet important, everywhere and nowhere, inchoate" (3). In *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of the Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture and Consciousness*, Virginia Postrel states that often style is defined in terms of surface impressions or is linked to our sensory experiences such as seeing and feeling (xi). In other words, style refers to aesthetic expressions that are created through the use of sensory experiences to convey various meanings (Ewen 22; Postrel xi).

Robert Hariman argues: "style ultimately is a significant dimension of every human experience" in which "relations of control and autonomy are negotiated through the artful composition of speech, gesture, ornament, décor, and any other means for modulating perception and shaping response" (2-3). Georg Simmel parallels this point revealing that: "What drives modern man so strongly to style is the unburdening and concealment of the personal, which is the essence of style" (69). Because style is a facet of personal expression, the use of styles also has become more prevalent as Daniel Miller

in *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* declares: "…style has achieved a certain autonomy in contemporary society going beyond its capacity for ordering to become itself the focus of concern" (129). While other scholars have analyzed style, many of them mainly have studied the uses of dress, commodities, or aesthetics by looking at these aspects individually.

However, because style is multifaceted and, especially since the way that people use it today is a combination of the uses of dress, commodities, performances, language and aesthetics, we need to look closer at how these aspects intertwine and how they aid us in our creation of identities. Simultaneously, there also is a need to understand how style operates within a social context. That is to say, we need a better understanding of how style functions in the process of meaning-making in social settings. As such, I will use the term *social style* to encompass, not only style, but also how this employment of style operates within the social settings in which we find ourselves.

Social style is how we employ a system of signs as a means of creating who we are, who we are becoming, and/or who we want to be in terms of our identities. It also is a way that we both communicate who we are to others and a means by which we identify people. This system of signs is comprised of four dimensions which are as follows: 1) performance, 2) use of language, 3) commodities, and 4) aesthetics. Each of these aspects of social style intertwines and overlaps when we communicate our identities, when people identify us, when we identify them, or when social style is used in mass media representations. I recommend that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive as they sometimes overlap, that within given texts we may find one or a combination of these dimensions, and that sometimes one dimension will be more dominant than others. However, I will discuss each of these aspects separately so that we can understand how each contributes to the creation of social styles in contemporary society.

Performance

In constructing our social styles, I argue that we create a *rhetorical performance* of identity. As stated in chapter one, this view of identity as a rhetorical performance directly contrasts the SCIP view of identity because it allows us to see the fluidity and multiplicity of the ways in which we can utilize social styles rhetorically to create various identities. According to Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton's work *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, performance is:

> something *done*, an activity. One particularly relevant cognate term of performance here is that of 'practice'. But another related term is 'performativity', generally used to express the idea both that language *does* something—that its power is not just to represent but to bring about effects—but also certain phenomena exist in the doing of them—that they have to be continually performed to exist at all (2-3).

The scholars note that aside from their definition performance has three other attributes. The second feature of performance, then, is that of *repetition,* which usually involves the replication of gestures, actions, or behaviors that can be seen as following "scripts, or the acting out of codes"[13] (Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton 3). The third and fourth aspects of performance are that it is closely linked with meanings that are "theatrically-derived" and as such, it is "ephemeral, unpredictable, improvisatory, always contingent on contexts"(Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton 3). Therefore, performance "generally—but not always—involves display to an audience," in the sense that we enact certain behaviors and practices for others and ourselves to convey who we are, who we are becoming, or who we would like to become. This creation of identity also is one that has to be continually constructed and repeated. In fact, some scholars argue that our creation of identities is entirely constructed through our performances of them.

[13] Although the authors do not explicitly refer to it is as such, this repetition also can be linked to ritual as Eric Rothenbuhler explains: "Rituals are forms of customary behavior...In addition to being behavior that has been done this way before by others, ritual is regularly recurring" (20-21).

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler contends that gender is "performative" declaring: "In this sense gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (25). She pronounces that gender identity does not exist outside of the performance of it and is, in fact, "constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 25) Butler parallels scholars Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton's view that it is through practice and repetition that gender is created (31-32).

Arguing against the idea of a pre-established gender identity, Butler points out that parodies of gender simply demonstrate the fact that gender is performative or practiced in the first place which also helps to disrupt that "privileged and naturalized gender configuration" that dominates scholarship (146-147). As a result of Butler's work, several scholars have also used her theory to question the performances of masculinity, sexual orientation, race, and the notion of "passing" or the use of a false identity. (E.g., Gingrich-Philbrook, 1994; Corey, 1996; and Warren, 2001).

Again, we use various performances depending on the social situations in which we find ourselves that also are often used as a form of influence, or rhetoric, in our self-presentations. For example, a person who is anti-social in other aspects of her life may have to perform as if she is the most social, gregarious person in the world in her job as a museum guide where she is expected to give lively tours to thousands of groups each day. Therefore, this use of performance works in tandem with the other dimensions, such as our use of language, to which I now turn.

Use of Language

Just as our rhetorical performances of self create identities, so too does our use of language. By language, I mean that our verbal and nonverbal means of communication also convey various social styles. As Susan Bickford argues in her work, "Anti-Anti

Identity Politics: Feminism, Democracy, and the Complexities of Citizenship," identities are created through the use of speech and actions that also demonstrate various social categories to which we belong (119-123). That is to say, we utilize language rhetorically as a means of creating various social styles, which in turn constitute our identities.

In *Social Standing in America: New Dimensions of Class*, Richard Coleman and Lee Rainwater suggest that speech can be used to indicate our class position indicating: "If speech is indeed so important a sign of class, it is because it is believed to tell, through both style and content, so many things about the speaker; level of intelligence, education, values, standards, aspirations, and knowledge" (88). Paul Fussell in *Class*, also claims that the social category of class is recognized through speech advising: "Regardless of the money you've inherited, the danger of your job, the place you live, the way you look, the shape and surface of your driveway…your social class is still most clearly visible when you say things" (151). For example, the use of improper English and slang may allude to a person's level of class and education. Again, we employ language strategically to convey our social styles to others. If someone, therefore, wants to associate with a particular social category, he or she may utilize language that fits it such as using popular slang to convey youth.

Language usage, therefore, can indicate groups to which people belong, such as professions, because they may employ specialized language that is only known to members of that group. For example, doctors have specialized vocabulary that they use in their work. Language also is something that we use strategically and can be manipulated depending upon the various social situations in which we find ourselves. An example of this strategic use of language is the doctor who uses specialized vocabulary and proper English at the hospitals, but talks using slang at home with her family. These choices are rhetorical ones in that we utilize language depending on the social situations in which we

find ourselves to create our identities and as a means of influencing how others perceive us.

Even our use of nonverbal language such as posture, proximity to others, and use of touch rhetorically can create a sense of identity. As Marc Riess and Paul Rosenfeld demonstrate, in "Seating Preferences as Nonverbal Communication: A Self-Presentation Analysis," seating preference as a nonverbal means of communication can be used to create a sense of self presentation as they conclude: "The results of this experiment indicate that role-playing individuals differentially used their choice of seats in discussion groups for self-presentation purposes…Individuals chose (a) head positions to convey impressions of leadership and dominance, (b) positions that furnished the closest interpersonal distances to convey attraction, (c) seats which afforded the greatest interpersonal distance and least visual accessibility vis-à-vis the head positions to indicate that they did not care to participate" (27).

For example, a person who is a CEO of a company may always sit at the head of a table to convey his authority even when he is out to lunch with his employees. Similarly, a person who wants to convey that he is open and friendly may sit close to people and smile more. In this sense, our nonverbal communication, as a strategic choice, also serves as a form of rhetoric that influences how people view us or how we view ourselves. Yet closely related to our uses of language is the use of commodities to which I now turn.

Commodities

In creating their identities rhetorically through the use of social styles, people use commodities such as clothing, houses, cars, other material goods, and activities such as travel, vacationing, and sports as a means of presenting themselves to others and as a means of self-design. These commodities function as signs that convey various social meanings for as McCracken says: "Goods serve both individuals and culture as bridges to

displaced meaning. They are one of the devices that can be used to help in the recovery of meaning" (109). In other words, our use of commodities as signs is one of the ways that we try to communicate who we are, or want to be, to others and ourselves.

As Jean Baudrillard advocates, commodities as signs have taken over how we view our world to the point that we are obsessed, not with the commodities per se, but what they represent as signs (e.g. wealth, power, poverty, youth, etc.) (*The Consumer Society* 32-33; 191-192). He explains: "In the final analysis the system of consumption is based on a code of signs (object/signs) and differences, and not only need and pleasure" (in Glickman, 48). George Ritzer advances that Baudrillard views consumption as "an order of significations" in which people manipulate objects as signs, view them as "a system of exchange," create differences based upon them, and are socially-constrained by them (in *The Consumer Society*, 15).

Similarly, many scholars[14] believe that commodities have significance in society that extends beyond their actual use. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood in *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* argue: "Consumption is the very area in which culture is fought over and licked into shape" (37). They emphasize that scholars need to look beyond the actual use of consumption and critically consider how it is full of meaning and "is an active process in which all the social categories are being continually redefined" (40-45). Grant McCracken also believes that commodities have an importance that "consists largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning" which also has political implications (71). As Hugh MacKay further explains: "Consumption is the articulation of a sense of identity. Our identity is made up by our consumption of goods—and their consumption and display constitutes our expression of

[14] Although these scholarly perspectives are similar to Baudrillard's view, in that they argue that commodities have value beyond their usage, they do not venture as far as Baudrillard's postmodern theory that there is no meaning beyond the realm of signs.

taste. So display—to ourselves and to others—is largely for symbolic significance, indicating our membership of a particular culture" (4). That is to say, we utilize commodities rhetorically as signs to create our social styles and this, in turn, helps to constitute and communicate our identities.

Stuart Hall, in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, argues that clothing functions as a sign, in this sense, stating they act as *signifiers* for various concepts such as "elegance," "formality," "casual-ness," and "romance" which are the *signifieds* (37-38). Hall further imparts: "This coding converts the clothes into *signs*, which can then be read as a language. In the language of fashion, the signifiers are arranged in a certain sequence, in certain relations to one another" with some items "going together" like tennis shoes and jeans or differences such as tennis shoes with an evening gown (37-38). Yet, Hall also points out: "These bits of clothing 'say something'—they convey meaning…Of course, not everybody reads fashion in the same way" (37-38). Extending this argument, we can begin to see how other goods, such as cell phones, houses, cars, and leisure activities signify meanings to others and ourselves about who we are or the kind of person we would like to become.

For example, a person who identifies himself as an environmentalist may not own a car, may grow his own food, and may purchase products that are environmentally-friendly because of his social and political stances that are directly related to his use of social style. Another example is a person who decides to by a specific brand of shoes, such as Blahnik Manolo, because they convey a sense of style, sophistication, and are the same as the ones worn by the lead character in *Sex and the City.*

Therefore, it is important to consider how commodities function rhetorically in the creation of social styles as a way of signifying and constructing various meanings to others and ourselves about our identities. As stated earlier, this process of identity

formation is rhetorical and when we use commodities we also choose some commodities over others based upon the social meanings that they will convey to others and ourselves. For example, our choice of car or vacation spot often tells people about our class, gender, age, and/or a host of other social categories serving as signs of social status. These choices also help us to understand and define who we are becoming or want to be to ourselves. Yet, it is important to remember that these various choices of commodities are strategic choices that we use to create meanings for ourselves and this creation of meaning often involves the use of aesthetics to which I now turn.

Aesthetics

According to Bradford Vivian's article "Style, Rhetoric, and Postmodern Culture":

> In a word, the current epoch appears to be informed, at least in its nascent stage, by an unprecedented investment in the *aesthetic*. Most notably, the present ubiquity of public spectacle has become a sustaining element of diverse social pursuits, from consumer culture and civic events to humanitarian causes and political programs. At such a historical movement, the category of *style*[15] offers renewed explanatory force (228).

David Chaney also puts forth that aestheticization has now more than ever become a part of our daily routine arguing that people employ material goods in creating their identities and lifestyles[16] (69-70). He perceives that one way to understand how people use material goods in an aesthetic sense is to imagine a "theme of design" that acts as a "self-conscious enterprise" in which people consume and utilize consumer goods for

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[15] Although several scholars discuss the terms "style" and "aesthetics" interchangeably, here I want to make it clear that I am regarding them as two separate, yet connected terms. *Aesthetics* refers to " *a guiding principle* in matters of artistic beauty and taste; artistic sensibility" and/or " *An underlying principle*, a set of principles, or a view often manifested by outward appearances or style of behavior" (emphasis added Dictionary.com) *Style* is *the way* that aesthetic expressions are created through the use of sensory experiences to convey various meanings (emphasis added Postrel 6).

[16] I will discuss the notion of "lifestyles" later in this chapter.

their aesthetic values and as tools for shaping their lives (149). In other words, people design the world around them, including their identities, and these creations are shaped by aesthetic appeals.

Therefore, playing a key role in our creations of identity through the rhetoric of social styles, aesthetics is a pervasive term found throughout both scholarly and non-scholarly discourses. However, its meaning is not often agreed upon (Brummett *Rhetoric of Machine* 4). Barry Brummett, in *Rhetoric of Machine Aesthetics*, ascertains that aesthetics has three different meanings which are as follows: 1) It "can be a *systematic way of thinking* about something, that something usually taken to be art, beauty, or sensory experience"; 2) It "can be a *faculty of appreciation* held or not held by an individual"; and 3) It "can be a *property of objects* or experiences themselves" (4). In other words, when we use the term aesthetic we can be discussing how someone considers beauty or an experience, their appreciation of something, and/or a property held by objects such as an aesthetic quality. Therefore, before further explaining how aesthetics contributes to our social styles and creations of identity, I begin with a definition for how I will be utilizing it.

Aesthetics is "the way we communicate through the senses. It is the art of creating reactions without words, through the look and feel of people, places, and things…Aesthetics shows rather than tells, delights rather than instructs" (Postrel 6). It can be considered the guiding principles underlying our use of the senses—sight, touch, smell, and taste—to create and evoke feelings, emotions, and thoughts in others. Following Brummett's work, I argue that aesthetics can be understood as:

> meaningful sensory reactions to experience, characteristics of experiences that facilitate some reactions and appreciations over others, an experience of appreciation or pleasure in those sensory reactions… and a unifying focus or noticing of sensory experience. An aesthetic reaction to an object or experience, I claim, is the product of an interaction between the socially influenced needs,

> interests, and perceptions of individual subjects and the parameters set for that experience by particular texts and objects (*Rhetoric of Machine* 9).

An aesthetic experience or the use of aesthetics does not mean that something is inherently attractive, beautiful or agreed upon to possess any "beauty" in the traditional sense (*Rhetoric of Machine* 9). In other words, objects or things that are considered "ugly" can also be said to have an aesthetic appeal for some people (9). Virginia Postrel, in *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture & Consciousness*, establishes that people often disagree over the use of aesthetics claiming, for example, "one man's dream house is another's eyesore" (10).

To create their identities through the rhetorical performance of social styles, people use the appeal of various aesthetics in their choices of commodities, use of language, and performances.[17] That is to say, they construct and craft their social styles using particular aesthetics and at the same time the social styles that they create have an aesthetic appeal. This is not to say that people try to create social styles that are consistent or beautiful. In other words, a person can choose to create social styles that are disjointed and some may even label them "ugly" if those styles hold an aesthetic for that person. Because styles are fluid, so is the notion of aesthetic, meaning that something that is considered "beautiful" or "trendy" for one period may be "outdated" and "ugly" in the next season.

As Postrel argues: "Although we often equate aesthetics with beauty, that definition is too limited. Depending on what reaction the creator wants, effective presentation may be strikingly ugly, disturbing, even horrifying…Or aesthetics may employ novelty, allusion, or humor, rather than beauty to arouse a positive response…"

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[17] I am not arguing that people did not use aesthetic appeals in the past. However, following Postrel's proposition, I claim that this use of aesthetic appeals is more pronounced than in the past as: "Aesthetics is more pervasive than it used to be…" and "they are increasingly personalized, and they are intensifying" (5).

(6). Therefore, it is not important for the aesthetic to be beautiful because a multiplicity of styles and use of aesthetics create our social styles dependent upon the meanings that we are trying to evoke in others or ourselves in rhetorical self-presentations as Susan Kaiser attests in Identity, Postmodernity, and the Global Apparel Marketplace": "In any case, we are participating in a process of producing identity when we construct our looks" (114). For example, a person may mix and match styles, such as a floppy hat, jeans worn under a thrift-store sundress, high heels, sunglasses, and carry an oversized bag to create a "retro-Bohemian" look.

From toilet brushes to cars to personal appearances, this "aesthetic imperative" also characterizes our everyday lives and is crucial to our identity formation (Postrel 35-65). As Postrel explains: "…aesthetics is not a value set off from the rest of life. Decoration and adornment are neither higher nor lower than 'real' life. They are a part of it (xv). She argues that increasingly, people are purchasing goods for their aesthetic value as well as their functional value and that this is a part of our daily lives. Thus, she claims that people crave products that have aesthetic value and employ aesthetics in their homes, personal appearances, cars, businesses, and lifestyles (164). This aesthetic value, in turn, rhetorically helps to create our social styles as the basis for our identities. Through this aestheticization, there also is an ever-increasing fluidity in our use of styles such that we can consider ourselves involved in a process of "stylization"(Lury 4).

As Celia Lury argues in *Consumer Culture*: " The thesis put forward is that a *process of stylization is what best defines consumer culture*" and I extend this to our rhetorical use of various social styles to create our identities (4). As Pierre Bourdieu elucidates in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*:

> …no areas in which the stylization of life, that is, the primacy of forms over functions, manner over matter does not produce the same effects. And nothing is more distinctive, more distinguished, than the capacity to confer aesthetic status

> on objects that are banal or even 'common'…or the ability to apply the principles of a 'pure' aesthetic to the most everyday choices of everyday life, e.g., in cooking, clothing, or decoration, completely reversing the popular disposition which annexes aesthetics to ethics (5).

In other words, Lury and Bourdieu argue that the process of stylization occurs in all facets of life including our creation of identities. As I stated previously, each of these dimensions contributes to our creation of social styles, which in turn, creates our identities. These identities as social styles are what communicate to others when we are in social situations. They are the means by which we try to identify and define who we are or would like to be for ourselves. They also are used in the process of creating the mass media images that continually proliferate our society. Now that I have discussed each dimension at length, I will further explain how we create our identities today through the rhetoric of social styles and how we may view these identities as *polystylistic*.

HOW SOCIAL STYLE CREATES IDENTITY TODAY OR POLYSTYLISM AT WORK

In chapter one, I proposed an alternative view of identity, polystylism, which is in direct contrast to a binarist, SCIP notion and allows for a more complex perspective of identity. As I alluded to earlier, the use of social styles to create our identities is inherently rhetorical and political. In other words, we employ our social styles *strategically* to align ourselves with or against other people. Further, we can adjust or adapt our social styles based on the social situations in which we find ourselves. As stated before, today people can choose the social styles they wish to utilize in the creation of their identities by adapting their uses of language and employing various aesthetics, behaviors, practices, performances, and commodities in these creations of self.

Some would argue that people cannot simply pick up and choose their social styles because society dictates both acceptable and unacceptable presentations of self such that we simply follow the cultural norms. However, I argue that the creation of

identity through the use of social style always involves choice whether conscious or unconscious. As Roderick Hart claims, the process of engaging in communication involves choice and a willingness to participate (7-8). Of course, we are always constrained socially by other people's expectations, financially because we can afford to purchase some commodities versus others, or materially meaning that some social categories such as race may have material, "real-world" impact on our lives. However, I am saying that largely in the 21st century there is more fluidity involved in how we are able to create our identities through social style because there are not many laws dictating how we dress, we are sometimes able to extend our buying power through the use of credit, and we can use language and performances to mask or enhance our identities in various presentations of self.

Further, I argue that because our employments of social styles to create identities are rhetorical strategies, we should view our identity formation and deployment as *polystylistic*. Counter to the SCIP view, our choices of social style to create identities are multiple and we can utilize various social styles depending on the social situations in which we find ourselves. As Virginia Postrel argues not only do people utilize style within their lives, they also invoke a plurality of styles today as: "Ours is a pluralist age, in which styles coexist to please the individuals who choose them" (Postrel 13).

She further maintains: "This trend [of stylization] doesn't mean that a particular style has triumphed or that we're necessarily living in a period of unprecedented creativity. It doesn't mean that everyone or everything is now beautiful, or that people agree on some absolute standard of beauty. The issue is not *what* style is used but rather *that* style is used, consciously and conscientiously, even in areas where function used to stand alone" (5). Again, this use of style is one that is multifaceted.

Stuart Ewen parallels this perspective by explaining: “Modern style speaks to a world where change is the rule of the day, when one's place in the social order is a matter of perception, the product of diligently assembled illusions” (23). Our contemporary view of style, as such, is that it is flexible, playful, and transient because: “Style today is an incongruous cacophony of images, strewn across the social landscape. Style may be borrowed from any source and turn up in a place where it is least expected. The stylish person may look like a duchess one week, a murder victim the next. Style can hijack the visual idiom of astronauts, or poach from the ancient pageantry of Guatemalan peasant costumes” (14). Therefore, this potential for multiplicity in identity construction contradicts the SCIP approach that limits identity to a single social category.

Further, the use of polystyle to create multiple identities or polyidentity can be both serial and layered. For example, a person can utilize a conservative style in the morning and a punk style in the afternoon. Likewise, a person can layer his or her styles such that at work the banker wears a dress shirt, but rolls up her sleeves to display her various tattoos. In other words, we are able to mix and match various styles either on separate occasions or simultaneously to present various identities to others and ourselves. Further, this rhetorical use of social style, or polystylism, also works in conjunction with the use of social categories.

As stated earlier, social style operates as a system of signs by which we identify others and ourselves. We also use these social styles in tandem with social categories.[18] Social categories refer to the labels that we, as a society, use to identify others and ourselves. These categories include race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ages, occupations, religions, educational backgrounds, social standing, other organizations to which we belong, other causes that we support, and a host of other categories.

[18] In chapter three, I will further delve into the relationship between social styles and social categories.

One could argue that some social categories such as race can act as *markers* of identity and while it is true that people have various skin tones, we also need to remember that this is still a social category which is a social construction even if it has material consequences. As stated previously, scholars that support the SCIP view of identity as rooted within a binarist identity politics make the mistake of limiting identity to one category as if that category is the sum of a person's identity wherein our identities are constituted by a multiplicity of categories. Therefore, in contrast to the SCIP approach and following Carrie Crenshaw's work I advocate that we need to look at how these categories jointly function rather than viewing them as separate or privileging one category over the other (254).

When looking at various social categories a person's gender and class are just as important as one's ethnicity and at the same time the person's education, religion, occupation, age, and other social categories to which she belongs also need to be considered within the analysis as these also may shape how she identifies herself and others. In other words, we need to realize that these social categories are overlapping, aid in the creation of our various social roles, and can sometimes come into conflict within social situations.

For example, Julia is a bisexual Latina who was born into a wealthy family, but identifies as working class. She also is a police officer that attended Boston University where she majored in political science. Each of these social categories—woman, bisexual, police officer, former student, rich, and working class—signifies various meanings with some possibly coming into conflict. In constructing her identity, Julia may utilize one or more of these categories depending on the social situations in which she finds herself. In this instance, an SCIP essentialist view would root Julia's identity in one category such as her sexual orientation.

However, following the notion of polystylism I assert that she may try to evoke these social categories through her use of various dimensions of social style. In other words, at work she wears her uniform that indicates her position as an officer and may use technical language as a part of her job. Because she identifies as working class, her behaviors at home, use of language, and clothing may convey a working-class aesthetic even though she is wealthy.

It also is important to realize that social categorizations are a process of naming such that some labels may be privileged over others, some may carry negative stigmas in society, and our use of categories carry within them our systems of creating and managing meaning. In other words, we must use rhetoric to manage all the meanings we cannot escape in a world of polystyle. As such it is important to see how people utilize these categories to label themselves and others. For example, the social category of police officer carries with it meanings such as authority, lawmaker, and control. In this sense, the use of social styles can be used rhetorically to evoke various social categories. Finally, this mix-ability of style makes it the perfect way to avoid essentialism because through the employment of styles people can create numerous meanings without "fixing" notions of identity.

Not only do people use social styles together with social categories to create identities, these categories and styles can be considered to be a part of and influenced by our habitus, as defined in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu argues that people are socialized into various groups by learning what particular "cultural codes" mean and how to respond to them which is based on their educations, manners, and class (2). He explains that if a person does not "possess the concepts which go beyond the sensible properties and which identify the specifically stylistic properties of the [artistic] work," or situation, he will not understand

the deeper level of "secondary meanings" which are "the level of meaning of what is signified" (2). In other words, a person has to know the cultural codes for a particular group to understand how taste operates within that group which is closely related to habitus.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions, which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks thanks to analogical transformations of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems" (*Outline* 83). Habitus is our way of viewing the world that is developed through our enculturation within a particular culture and class. Celia Lury clarifies this definition maintaining: "The habitus is evident in the individual's taken-for-granted preferences about the appropriateness and validity in his or her taste in art, food, holidays, hobbies, etc." which is shaped by family, groups to which we belong, class status, and education (83). It also is an "internalization of a given set of material conditions" (Lury 83). Habitus, therefore, can shape our views and understanding of various styles, the social categories they evoke, and their social meanings.

In this sense, habitus can be considered a foundation for the development of lifestyles. That is to say our habitus can influence the patterns by which we live our lives and can contribute to how we view and enact various lifestyles, which characterize modern society. In *Lifestyles*, David Chaney delineates: "Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people…Lifestyles therefore help to make sense of (that is explain but not necessarily justify) what people do, and why they do it, and what doing it means to them and others" (4). In other words, lifestyles are the categories that we give to different *patterns of living* that people have in modern society which are closely related to their use

of social resources and consumption which create "a distinctively modern form of status grouping" (14).

For many people, our lifestyles are a result of our move to a consumer culture in which we use ways of living, styles, and patterns of consumption as a means of labeling others and ourselves as lifestyle becomes "the definitive mode of consumption" (Chaney 14; Lury 80). Celia Lury determines: "through lifestyle, consumers are seen to bring a more stylized awareness or sensitivity to the process of consumption" (80). She states that lifestyles are "the ways in which people seek to display their individuality and their sense of style through the choice of a particular range of goods and their subsequent customizing or personalizing of these goods" and "This activity is seen to be a central life project for the individual" (Lury 80).

People also consider themselves as members of "particular lifestyle groupings" in which they use consumption as a means of expressing that they belong to a particular group and to differentiate themselves from other groups such that: "In this sense, lifestyle is thus an instance of the tendency for groups of individuals to use goods to make distinctions between themselves and other groups of individuals, and thus support the view that consumption practices can be understood in terms of a struggle over social positioning" (Lury 80). In other words, with polystylistic identities, I believe that people also are able to adopt various lifestyles and these choices of lifestyles operate rhetorically.

David Chaney argues that we need to view lifestyles as both sites and strategies, meaning that they operate rhetorically, because as sites "they are physical metaphors for the spaces that actors can appropriate or control" and as strategies "lifestyles are best understood as characteristic modes of social engagement, or narratives of identity in which the actors concerned can embed the metaphors at hand" (91-92) In other words, he

believes that "lifestyles are creative projects, they are forms of engagement in which actors make judgments in delineating an environment" (92). They also exemplify how people utilize style as a form of creating identities or as a process of self-design (Chaney 4).

Susan Kaiser in "Identity, Postmodernity, and the Global Apparel Marketplace" says: "In the everyday context, style affords an outlet for experimenting with a whole host of changing boundaries and collages of ideas and identities" (10). Our identities as created through our social styles, therefore, are fluid and maintain a sense of play as we can draw upon a variety of social styles to communicate who we are, or want to be, to others and create representations. Again, this creation of identities is polystylistic because we can draw upon multiple styles to create who we are or to represent ourselves to others.

As Stuart Hall claims in "The Question of Cultural Identity":

> The more social life becomes mediated by the global marketing of styles, places and images, by international travel, and by globally networked media images and communications systems, the more *identities* become detached—disembedded—from specific times, places, histories, and traditions, and appear 'free-floating'. We are confronted by a range of different identities, each appealing to us, or rather to different parts of ourselves, from which it seems possible to choose (in Hall, Held, and McGrew 303).

That is to say, we also draw upon various representations of social style found within advertising, media, and everyday life and use these in our creations of identity.

Belonging also is managed in style as groups create identities and representations through the social styles they employ. Similar to our language usage, groups that want to show affiliation may employ the same kinds of social styles (i.e. dress, use of commodities, speech or vocabulary, and/or create similar rhetorical performances of self). Thus, displaying certain kinds of social styles also may be required for membership

into a particular group or to identify that a person belongs to that group. For example, Paul Fussell, in the book *Uniforms*, points out that various occupations in our society, such as chefs, are enigmatic with their uniforms explaining that uniforms "ask to be taken seriously, with suggestions of probity and virtue (clergy and nuns, judges when robed), expertise (naval officers, senior chefs, airline pilots), trustworthiness (Boy and Girl Scouts, letter carriers, delivery men and women), courage (U.S. Marines, police officers, fire fighters)…"(3-4). Taking this one step further, I would argue that people's uniforms, or dress, along with the uses of language, aesthetics, and performance combine to create that person's or group's social style. For example, chefs not only dress in similar uniforms, they also employ specialized language based upon their profession, are trained in similar ways to exhibit certain cooking techniques in restaurants, and also utilize similar commodities (i.e. pots, pans, spatulas) in their everyday professional lives.

Again, these choices of social style to create an image or identity are rhetorical ones. In today's society, Susan Kaiser states: "Image and style seem to be in a constant state of flux" (111). It is for these reasons that social style as a creator of identity needs to be more closely examined as a contemporary phenomenon because it is found within all aspects of daily life as it "is inextricably woven into the fabric of social, political and economic life" (Ewen 23). Now, I turn to the social and political implications of social style in society.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF IDENTITY AS SOCIAL STYLE

The social and political implications of identities as created through the use of social styles are manifold. First, social style as identity helps to create group identity signaling those groups to which we belong and those to which we do not belong. It is used socially in our process of creating relationships and how we label people within society. It is also used to separate us from others. In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*,

Dick Hebdige explains that various groups use the "subversive implications of style" as a form of resistance to the dominant social structure to create their identities in opposition to the dominant mode, which can be defined as subcultures (2-3). For Hebdige, "the meaning of subculture is then, always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force" (3). Extending this view of subculture to social styles in general, I also advocate that social styles in the process of creating our identities can be "sites of struggle" in which people resist, contest, and fight over meanings associated with various social styles.

In contrast to the SCIP approach that roots a person's political stance in a single category of identity, the idea of polystylism allows for people to align politically across various social categories as well as allows for politics itself to be more fluid. Also, the binarist view closes off our understanding of certain kinds of politics. For example, a SCIP view of identity politics would argue that one cannot be a minority and a conservative at the same time because as a minority a person will support politics that favors "the oppressed." Yet, as we saw in the last presidential election, identity is more complicated than being rooted in one social category such as race. In other words, just because a person is a minority does not mean that he or she cannot also be a conservative because other areas of his or her identity such as class, education, occupation, age, groups to which he or she belongs, etc. might also influence his or her rhetorical usage of social style to create identity.

It is for these reasons that social style can be considered to operate politically because of the hegemonic force of dominant culture and the ideologies that are created by various styles within discourse. However, all social styles whether considered "mainstream" or "alternative" evoke various ideologies that are associated with them and these meanings also are "struggled over" in discourse. Again, contrary to SCIP,

polystylism does not reduce these meanings to their "essential" or "true" nature. Instead, polystylism allows for criticism of these categories and provokes a continual questioning and rethinking about how these categories operate rhetorically. Finally, polystylism does not assert that there is only one way to view identity or a right way to view identity thereby allowing for a multiplicity of meanings that are subject to acceptance, rejection, and/or provoke further debate.

Social style as identity can operate as a strategy by which we can create common ground within groups or cause division between them. It operates in our society also in the sense that some social styles and identities are politically privileged over others and this privileging may shift over time. It functions as a way that we create social categories or make judgments about others such as their genders, races, classes, etc. In other words, people employ it as a method of marking or labeling others which, in turn, functions as a "site of struggle" as Hebdige avows: "The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life" (17).

Again, unlike the SCIP view, polystylism does not cause scholars to get trapped in the binaries because it allows us to see how the creation of meanings is historically contingent. In other words, the ways in which we consider social categories, social styles, and various identities is fluid. That is to say, a social style that in the past was considered "inappropriate" and/or "risqué" may be considered conservative today based on changing societal values and norms.

As I argued earlier in chapter one, we need to move beyond viewing identity in terms of SCIP and paralleling this view, Robert Dunn proclaims: "I argue that the politics of identity and difference are only one manifestation of a generalized and structurally

induced *destabilization* of identity occurring in the West and perhaps throughout the rest of the world… It is necessary, therefore, to address contemporary problems of identity outside of the limited frameworks of identity politics and multiculturalism" (110). In other words, our usage of social styles allows us to destabilize and call into question various social categories and how identity functions.

Therefore, I believe that viewing identity's political potential through the lens of social styles, or the notion of polystylism, is one way to avoid falling into this trap of essentialism because we can see how each of the dimensions function strategically in the creation of various social styles and, in turn, how these operate rhetorically and politically within society. As Stuart Ewen asserts: "Increasingly, style has emerged as a decisive components of politics; political issue and politics are regularly subjective to the cosmic sorcery of image managers, providing the public with a telegenic commodity. Democratic choice, like grocery shopping, has become a question of which product is most attractively packaged, which product is most imaginatively merchandized" (22). In other words, social style has become an area that is a facet of our lives which shapes the social, material, political, and economic realms. Thus, we need to more closely examine how this works because as Ewen contends: "Style is a visible reference point by which we have come to understand life *in progress*…Style is also a significant element of power" (23).

MOVING TOWARD A METHODOLOGY

Throughout this chapter, I have outlined a definition for the term social style by explaining why our identities are complex communicative and rhetorical practices that have been influenced by the postmodern turn, changing social roles, heightened consumption, and a proliferation of mass media images such that the way to view identity today is by analyzing how it is managed in style. Then, I argued that social style consists

of four intersecting dimensions, which are performance, use of language, commodities, and aesthetics. Finally, I discussed how social style creates identity today and the social and political implications of identity as social style, a point to which I will return in Part Two when I examine two texts.

In order to show that the theory of polystylism is valid, the methodology utilized will have to prove five related questions which are as follows: 1) Does the use of social styles allow for the creation of multiple identities (i.e. polyidentity)? 2) Does the use of social styles allow people to create identities that are polycategorical, yet unified? 3) Does the use of social styles create a multiplicity of social meanings about identity? 4) Do people use social styles strategically to create identities based upon the social situations in which they find themselves and in the process of group identification or disassociation? and 5) Does the use of social styles help us to avoid a SCIP view of identity?

Therefore, in the next chapter I outline the methodological framework of rhetorical homology that I will utilize for this dissertation and explain the steps one would undertake to analyze identity using this approach. First, I will outline Barry Brummett's theory of rhetorical homology and explain why it can be applied to the study of identity. Then, I will devise my approach that augments Brummett's original theory by focusing on rhetorical homologies of personae and will fuse this scope with the theory of Dick Hebdige. Next, I will outline the kinds of texts that one would need to look at to undertake this kind of study providing a brief example of the method at work. Finally, I will preview the Application Chapters of the dissertation by giving an overview of the texts that will be utilized in this study, offering justification for why they are appropriate examples to use to demonstrate how identity is manifested through the use of social styles, and will explain how this is a site of struggle today.

Ch. 3-Rhetorical Personae: A Methodological Framework for Discerning Identities as Created Through The Rhetoric of Social Styles

> "The method of rhetorical homology, identifying discourse as the generative ground of formal parallels, is attributed to the discursive, textual world that global culture is increasingly becoming"
> Barry Brummett—*Rhetorical Homologies: Form, Culture, Experience*

In chapter two, I proposed the theoretical framework of polystylism as a means for understanding how contemporary identities are created through the rhetoric of social styles. I stated that to prove whether this theory is feasible, the methodology utilized would need to affirm the following propositions: 1) People use social styles to create multiple identities that are socially-dependent; 2) People use social styles to create polycategorical, yet unified identities; 3) People use social styles strategically as a form of creating association or disassociation with others; 4) The use of social styles creates a multiplicity of meanings about identities; and 5) The use of social styles helps us to avoid an essentialist, SCIP view of identity. The methodology chosen also must be one that provides critics with the ability to capture and decipher each of the four dimensions of social style (i.e. performance, language, commodities, and aesthetics), explains their relationship to each other, and provides evidence as to how they may function in the rhetorical creation and maintenance of identities. Therefore, the method proposed herein will enable critics to discover unity in a world of polystyle because at first glance these disparate elements of social style in the creation of identities may seem far-flung or unrelated. However, they may nevertheless be homologous in their creation of significant cultural, social, and political meanings.

Here, I offer a methodological framework, *rhetorical personae*, that will provide evidence as to the feasibility of polystylism by drawing upon the method of rhetorical

homology as outlined by Barry Brummett in his recent work *Rhetorical Homologies: Form, Culture, Experience*. While employing it as a starting point, I will augment Brummett's method to devise an approach for understanding the multifaceted nature of identities today by fusing the concept of rhetorical homology with my theoretical framework of social style as outlined in chapter two. Specifically, I will draw upon the notion of homologies of personae to suggest that a methodological approach to the study of contemporary identities consists of two key foci, which are as follows: 1) social style and 2) rhetorical homologies of personae. Further, critics can choose to utilize either a micro (i.e. social style) or macro (i.e. rhetorical homologies of personae) approach to study identity or use one approach to lead to the other. In other words, critics could begin from the micro perspective of social style and segue to the macro perspective of rhetorical homologies of personae or vice-versa.

Therefore, I begin this chapter by outlining the theory of rhetorical homology and explaining why it can be applied to the study of identity. Then, I will devise the micro approach of social style, based upon my theoretical framework in chapter two, and fuse this scope with Brummett's original theory by focusing on rhetorical homologies of personae to create a macro approach. Next, I will outline the kinds of texts that one would need to look at to undertake this kind of study providing a brief example of the method at work. Finally, I will preview the Application Chapters of the dissertation by giving an overview of the texts that will be utilized in this study, offering justification for why they are appropriate examples to use to demonstrate how identity is manifested through the use of social styles, and discussing how this is a site of struggle in contemporary society.

USING BRUMMETT'S THEORY OF RHETORICAL HOMOLOGY TO STUDY IDENTITY

In viewing identity as created and managed through the employment of social style, I believe that the methods used to analyze this phenomenon needs to account for

the intertextual nature of how social style functions as a *system of signs* dispersed throughout a variety of texts and discourses. However, as a system of signs, it also seems necessary to consider how these various signs work *in conjunction* or as "an order of significations" in which people manipulate commodities as signs, view them as a "system of exchange," create differences based upon them, and are socially constrained by them (Baudrillard, *The Consumer* 15). As such, it seems that the best methodological approach to use is the category of *homology* to trace out the relationships that exist in our usages of various social styles in the creation of identity (*Rhetorical Homologies* 1).

A *homology*, according to Brummett, "is a formal linkage among two or more kinds of experiences. It is a situation in which two or more kinds of experiences appear or can be shown to be structured according to the same pattern in some important particulars of their material manifestations" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 39-40). A homology, in other words, means a similarity underlying objects, actions, and/or experiences. That is to say, although those experiences, actions and/or objects may appear to be different or unrelated, they match on a formal level such that there are "formal parallels among seemingly disparate things or experiences" ("The Homology" 203).

For example, an accountant whose company is downsizing might find her real life experiences homologous with a contestant on the television show *Survivor*. At first glance, it does not appear that an accountant, someone who spends her workday solving problems and crunching numbers, would have parallel experiences to someone trapped on a desert island forced to live with strangers on limited resources. However, at a *formal* level the two experiences are homologous in the sense that each person is trying to avoid being eliminated and must devise strategies for "staying alive" whether on the island or within the company. In other words, these experiences are homologous because each

person may feel anxiety about the precarious notion of being eliminated—either by being fired or by being voted off the island.

Again, on strictly the level of content, these two experiences do not seem to match, but by taking a step back or looking at both experiences more abstractly, we can see how they are homologous. Likewise, in our creation of identities, it may sometimes appear as if the dimensions, or content, comprising our social styles (performance, language, commodities, and aesthetics) are disjointed, random, and/or have no relationship to each other. However, it may be that these dimensions are homologous on a formal level that is not so readily apparent on strictly a level of content.

Brummett claims that homologies can be found underlying "the kinds of experiences that are thought of as primarily textual and…may bring texts into the same pattern as extratextual experience" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 2). In this sense, he notes that homologies are "bridging devices" between the discursive and the nondiscursive, which "suggests a wide, and a formal circumference within which to understand particular acts, whether material or discursive" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 25, 36). For example, you may discover that in attending college your experience feels like a hero's journey in which the "boon" you seek is a diploma or when driving on a crowded highway, you notice that the experience is like being on a battlefield. Similarly, while our identities are rooted within discourse they also heavily draws upon material goods and objects as a part of the meaning-making process. Therefore, homologies may act as "bridging devices" by helping us to understand how the discursive and material realms function in tandem in the creation of our identities.

To indicate that a homology exists, Brummett maintains that critics would have to discover "important connections among different orders of experience, revealing new information about those orders and about the underlying form that connects them"

(*Rhetorical Homologies* 8). As such, the "most interesting" homologies are those that can be shown to exist "among *disparate* orders of experience, such as texts, media, different kinds of material experience, and so forth. The more disparate, the more interesting and insightful is the homology" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 2). He believes that "there are 'real' connections within patterned regularities that can be studied and explained, and it suggests that the nature of connection is systematic and theorizable" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 10). In other words, Brummett advocates that a critic can systematically trace connections between various forms of experiences and texts. Homologies, therefore also might be a way for us to trace how the seemingly unrelated discourses and material experiences that constitute our identities connect in meaningful ways. Yet, in discovering a homology a critic is not limited to outlining only one homology.

Instead, homologies can be "multiple and simultaneous" meaning that there can be more than one homology that exists within a text, an experience, or across texts, experiences, and media (i.e. discursive and non discursive realms) (*Rhetorical Homologies* 25). Therefore, Brummett believes that critics may be able to discern multiple homologies within a text or trace the most prevalent homology found while simultaneously, there might be others that exist explaining that the various forms "may affect the way in which the elements ordered within a homology are themselves structured and understood" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 25). As such, homologies might also help us to discover a multiplicity of meanings about how our identities are manifested through the use of various social styles. Now, I will explain how homologies also can be considered rhetorically.

Demonstrating the connection between rhetoric and homology, Brummett states a *rhetorical homology* "is a special case of formal resemblance, grounded in discursive properties that facilities the work of political and social rhetoric or influence"(*Rhetorical*

Homologies 3). He believes that rhetorical homologies are both "grounded within" and subject to how discourse functions because discourse "follows the logics of its own structures and imperatives" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 11-12). In other words, Brummett claims that rhetorical homologies are a product of the way that language functions in that it is structured and rule-governed, yet it allows for flexibility and change. As stated earlier in chapter one, the transformational quality of language means that it is always in a state of becoming something else and that there is always the potential to change a situation because language also provides the requisite tools to enact change through the recharacterizations of situations (Burke, *Permanence* 74, 85). Rhetorical homologies, therefore, can help us to understand how our identities can be constrained or rule-governed, yet still maintain flexibility.

Not only are rhetorical homologies governed by discourse, Brummett also explains: "All members of a rhetorical homology are linked together by the guiding intelligence (structure) of the discursive form that organizes them" (42). They are therefore, "vulnerable" to each other and other discourses because: " Vulnerability is but another way of saying that one experience may have *rhetorical* effect on how people perceive and order another experience or group of experiences if they are formally linked" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 42). In other words, one part of the homology may influence or change how the other components function. For example, if a hero's journey features a woman as the heroine, this aspect has a rhetorical effect on the homology's structure as well as other discourses surrounding what it means to be a hero, a woman, and/or how adventures are characterized. Likewise, rhetorical homologies might help us to see how our identity creations are vulnerable to other discourses as well as subject to the social categories that comprise them.

Homologies, according to Brummett also are "clearly rhetorical" because they not only are parallel forms that arise across various texts and experiences, they also function as a form of "equipment for living" because they offer advice to people (*Rhetorical Homologies* 24-25). He states that rhetorical homologies give audiences advice about whether "to accept or reject a situation, and in accepting or rejecting, [how] to construct the situation one way or another" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 24-25). Rhetorical homologies, therefore, offer audiences advice as to the kinds of situations people are facing as well as how to deal with those situations by accepting, rejecting, or redefining them. In this sense, rhetorical homologies can help us to analyze how and why people base their identities on various media representations as well as how and why people characterize identities in various ways.

In offering advice to people, rhetorical homologies found within texts and experiences also have "rhetorical power" because they are a form of influence (*Rhetorical Homologies* 2). This rhetorical power also "directs the attention of people in that particular way and is thus *inherently* rhetorical" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 27). In other words, the homology is a *particular* kind of homology with a focus and as such causes people to view a situation from a *particular* viewpoint as a "selection of reality" (Burke, *Language* 45). Therefore, rhetorical homologies also have the power to "shape reality" or how people view it (*Rhetorical Homologies* 29).In turn, these rhetorical homologies might also help us to further understand how our claims of identity operate as forms of influence in the various social situations in which we find ourselves.

However, Brummett does not seem to argue that homologies function from a top-down model where people are forced to accept given homologies. Instead, he argues that people have choice explaining: "Choice of homologies thus becomes a rhetorical choice of homologies given the effect that different formal alignments will create" (31). This

argument is one reason why people may flock to a particular genre or set of experiences. Rhetorical homologies also involve a process of "sorting," or separating and characterizing something as one kind or another, and within this process, there are conflicts that arise between individuals (Brummett, *Rhetorical Homologies* 40).

Therefore, ideology also is a component of rhetorical homologies because they can be considered "sites of struggle" in which "a homology thus entails its own ideological struggles and contradictions that arise from that embodiment in history" (Brummett, *Rhetorical Homologies* 38). The ways in which individuals sort and manage situations are "thus always a site of struggle over how individuals deal with their particular circumstances and how socially held instruments of sorting (form, language) influence our sorting" (Brummett, *Rhetorical Homologies* 40). As such, the ways in which we view and characterize our experiences through the discourses we choose also have "political, social and rhetorical consequences" (Brummett, *Rhetorical Homologies* 42). At the same time, by looking at rhetorical homologies we may be able to see how we "sort" or categorize various types of identities and how this sorting process has social, political, cultural, and material consequences for various groups of people.

Brummett goes even further to assert that our choice of discourse also is a way of creating reality because: " We make the world by ordering it and we order the world rhetorically—to be rhetorical is to order it, and in ordering items we do so with one or another social and political outcomes" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 219). Rhetorical homologies, according to Brummett, "thus merge distinctions between traditional, expositional forms of rhetoric and the more fragmented, nonverbal narrative forms of popular culture" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 220). Therefore, Brummett's method of rhetorical homologies assists critics in capturing the dispersed fragments that underlie various texts, experiences, and media that can sometimes be far flung or at first glance

may seem unrelated in our contemporary society. In turn, this method is particularly useful to critics because it allows them the ability to capture the "thick descriptions" that are necessary when dealing with multifaceted phenomena (Geertz 3-30; Chaney 38).

Further, I propose that because identities are constituted by four dimensions of social style, (i.e. performance, language, commodities, and aesthetics), these dimensions also may seem unrelated at first glance so the methodology utilized needs to be able to demonstrate how these dimensions interact within the rhetorical practice of identity creation. The ability to decipher unity among disparate elements of polystyle is necessary because sometimes those elements that seem unrelated actually possess coherence influencing each other and affecting the overall meanings surrounding an identity or identities. This approach also helps us to go beyond the simplistic SCIP view because we can see how identities may consist of multiple categories, yet still may possess unity and generate significant social, cultural, and political meanings.

For instance, in chapter two I used the example of Julia, a bisexual Latina woman who is wealthy, a police officer, and a former student of Boston University. An SCIP approach would root Julia's identity within one social category such as her sexual orientation or race, which would limit Julia's politics to an outgrowth of this primary identity. Yet, if we move beyond the SCIP approach to the theory of polystylism, we may begin to see that although there are multiple categories that create her identity (some of which come into direct conflict), there is coherence across these multiple categories that is managed in style. In other words, we might be able to see that Julia's use of social style suggests working class because she mostly wears her uniform at work, uses technical language, and often goes to the local bar after work for drinks with her fellow officers. Likewise, at home she may wear jeans with holes in them, a thrift store blouse, sneakers, and no jewelry. She also may speak using broken English and slang regardless

of whether she is at work or at home. Therefore, Julia's creation of identity seems based on the social style of working class in both cases. Yet, this example also suggests that Julia's construction of identity may be based on multiple categories such as her sexual orientation, race, class, and/or occupation which may further complicate those political issues that she supports or groups with which she aligns.

Therefore, the method of rhetorical homology can provide further insight into how identities can be polycategorical and political, yet not solely be based on a binarist, SCIP view. Further, the method of rhetorical homology can also show consistency across multiple entities that sometime seem incongruous or unrelated. Yet, while drawing upon Brummett's method of rhetorical homology as a guide to the study of identity, I will augment this method by fusing it with my own theoretical framework as outlined in chapter two. To do so, I will outline my own methodological framework, *rhetorical personae*, for analyzing how identity creation is manifested through the rhetorical performance of social styles by drawing upon and extending Brummett's approach.

RHETORICAL PERSONAE: A METHOD FUSING SOCIAL STYLE & RHETORICAL HOMOLOGY

Throughout chapters one and two, I offered the theory of polystylism as an alternative to a one-dimensional, SCIP view of identity. I stated that to approach the study of identity, the methodology chosen would need to provide evidence showing that the process of creating and managing identities is mainly constructed through the use of social styles, this identity construction is multifaceted, and although they are polycategorical, identities can still be unified. I also stated that the method would need to show how identity as created through social styles could still have rhetorical and political implications without falling into the trap of the essentialist, binarist view and I assert that

the method of rhetorical personae will accomplish these objectives through either a *micro* or *macro* approach.

First, I note that depending upon the kind of text(s) and experiences studied, the critic may choose to begin using a *micro* (social style) or *macro* (rhetorical homologies of personae) approach and/or use one approach to lead to the other. A *micro* approach will demonstrate how social style creates identity on an individual or group level and the rhetorical, social, and/or political implications of this particular identity. On the other hand, a *macro* approach will demonstrate how larger cultural phenomena influence our various creations of identities. If using a combination of the two approaches such that one leads to the other, this dual approach may point to deeper meanings surrounding how our individual creations of identity are influenced and constrained by larger cultural phenomena such as representations within mass media and/or cultural norms.

However, it also may not be necessary for a critic to utilize all of the steps that follow nor does a critic have to proceed in this order each time that he or she analyzes texts or experiences. In other words, these steps should be viewed more as a guide or circumference of the ways that a critic could proceed in analyzing how the rhetoric of social style creates identity. I also adapt Brummett's original method in which he labels the steps that follow as principles stating:

> …if one of these principles seems not useful, one should not entertain it. Each principle is intended to encourage the critic to look both toward the homology and toward the politics and history of specific iterations of the form that break out in concrete material experiences. Such sites of real historical struggles have their own effects on other such experiences as well as on the homological structures within which other, future, experiences are understood—just as homological structures have effects on the ways in which the particular and the historical is understood (45-46).

In augmenting and extending Brummett's method, I have added additional steps and questions that would be appropriate for analyzing how the rhetoric of social style

creates identities[19] as well as devised the micro approach of social style based upon my theoretical framework in chapter two. Now, I will outline the specific steps that I will undertake in utilizing this method:

Micro Approach—Social Style

Based upon the theoretical framework I offered in chapter two, I propose that the first way that a critic can study how we create identities today is by using a *micro* approach and therefore I devised this method for analyzing social style. If a critic decides to approach a text or experience on a *micro* level, he or she would begin by analyzing social style because this may provide evidence as to how we create our identities by using a multiplicity of social categories and styles as well as how these identities function socially, rhetorically, and politically. In other words, by looking at various social categories and the four dimensions of social style, this may help a critic to avoid the SCIP view because the analysis will not be solely rooted within a single category of identity. Therefore, a critic would undertake these steps for a *micro* approach:

1. Identify and describe the four dimensions of social style that are present within the text and what each dimension signifies. This identification will help the critic to determine the characteristics and meanings of the four dimensions.
2. Analyze how each of the four dimensions works in conjunction. This comparison will tell the critic about the relationship between the four dimensions as well as whether they suggest a particular homology of style.
    - Does one dimension dominate the text or seem most prevalent?
    - How does each dimension constrain and/or reinforce the others?
    - Is there a homology of style present in the text? If so, what are the characteristics of this homology?

[19] I italicize those steps are from Brummett's original method of rhetorical homology.

If the dimensions do suggest a homology of style, this underlying form may help the critic better understand how the social style operates culturally, socially, rhetorically, and politically. As Dick Hebdige argues in *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style*, there are various homologies of style that exist within societies (113-117). He states that we can even though subcultures seem to create styles that lack coherence, often they are nevertheless homologous and I would expand this notion to argue that within the 21st century, even in a world of polystyle our creations of identity have a coherence that the method of rhetorical homology can help to reveal (113-117). Therefore, in tracing the four dimensions of social style, a critic also tries to discover if there is an underlying form or homology that connects these dimensions because this may help the critic to understand the "cultural significations" of the homology (Hebdige 13).

In other words, people imbue homologies of style with cultural meanings that become naturalized such that when someone displays a particular style people understand how to interact with the person based upon what that style signifies. Likewise, in our process of self-design, we utilize various styles based upon what they will signify about who we are, who we are becoming, and/or who we would like to be.

- Are there any dimensions that do not create a homology or seem incongruous to the other dimensions?

As Barry Brummett argues, the critic also should look for ruptures and breaks because this inconsistency also may point to significant or interesting cultural meanings (*Rhetorical Homologies* 2). In other words, the critic needs to consider what might be missing or incongruous to the social style being created because this rupture or inconsistency may provide more evidence as to the deeper meanings of the identity creation. Therefore, this missing link or aspect, if you will, may help to contextualize the other aspects of social style in their relationship to larger cultural meanings.

3. How might the use of social style be influenced and/or constrained by the social situation? In looking for influence and constraints on the social style, the critic may be able to determine how social styles might be limited by social situations and/or how people create identities that are adapted to the social situations in which they find themselves.
4. How is this social style situated historically? The answer to this question will provide the critic with evidence as to the significance of this identity creation and how it may be subject to or influenced by history and culture.
5. What are the rhetorical and political implications of this rhetorical performance of social style in the creation of identity? The answer to this question may point to the rhetorical and political influence that this social style and identity may have on how people create and manage meanings about identities as well as demonstrate how politics can be linked to identity, but not have to be rooted in a single social category.
6. Does this use of social style to create identity constitute a polycategorical identity or one based on a single social category? This inquiry will tell the critic whether people are able to create identities beyond a single category identity politics view.

Further, as Hebdige asserts the signs that people use to create and signify their styles should not be considered as "fixed," but rather as polysemic in which they are always in a process of transformation and should be regarded as a "*signifying practice*" (115-118). He states: "This phrase reflects exactly the group's [or individual's] central concerns with the ideological implications of form, with the idea of a positive construction and deconstruction of meaning, and with what has come to be called the 'productivity' of language" viewing language usage and meaning-making as transitory processes that are constantly reworked (118). In other words, because styles are

polysemic by looking at social style the critic is able to avoid "fixing" meaning as an SCIP view suggests. This method also provides the critic with flexibility and allows him to see a multiplicity of meanings.

Overall, the examination of social styles or a *micro* approach, will help the critic identify the various social and cultural meanings created through the use of performances, language, commodities, and aesthetics as well as how these may combine to help create our identities. It also will aid the critic in trying to decipher how the use of social styles to create identities might operate strategically based on various social situations. Again, this approach avoids SCIP notions of identity because it does not directly root a person's political stance to one primary identity category. A critic could stop here at the micro level, or she could proceed on next to undertake the macro approach as outlined below.

Macro Approach—Rhetorical Homologies of Personae

While I devised the micro approach based on the theoretical framework of chapter two and Brummett's original method, here I will draw more directly upon Brummett's theory of rhetorical homology to look at how identity creation operates on a *macro* level by narrowing the focus on rhetorical homologies, to those of *personae* or what some scholars historically have labeled archetypes. Following Brummett, I argue that we can view "rhetorical homologies as central to postmodern life and how we understand it" and nowhere is this idea more relevant than in analyzing how people create their contemporary identities (*Rhetorical Homologies* 208). I propose that in creating their identities one resource to which people turn is that of *persona*. Earlier in chapter two, I argued that people create and manage their identities based upon the social situations or "scenes" in which they find themselves. Borrowing from Burke, Brummett explains: "the act-scene" relationship is important in tracing how form develops because: "To be placed

in one context as opposed to another, such that the very character of the act so placed changes, suggests that a given act, event, sign, and so forth may be placed in different patterns or forms. On the one hand, the form in that event is the context. The scene suggests the pattern into which the particular act is enrolled" (*Rhetorical Homologies* 25). In other words, while this action may not be a conscious one people may utilize rhetorical homologies of personae strategically depending upon the scenes in which they find themselves or they may live in conformity to them. Likewise, the ways that people make sense of homologies are dependent on the social contexts in which they are placed. Therefore, the critic also is able to look for rhetorical homologies of personae because they may help her to discover the underlying, deeper meanings of identity creations in various social contexts.

Not only does scene influence how identities are understood, we also can consider the "agent" in the sense that when we communicate with others, we sometimes take on or enact various "personae" or types of people. As Brummett and Bowers explain in "Oprah Winfrey, Sojourner Truth, and the Recurring Wise Woman of Diverse, Mass-Mediated Societies": "the kinds of people that we become, the kinds of personae that there are to become in a given society, are formed and encoded discursively" (160). In this chapter, the further assert that these various personae can be recurring, especially in popular representations stating:

> Any society will have certain kinds of characters that are explicitly embodied in its discourses more often or more powerfully than others. These are widely known characters, and especially in complex, mass-mediated societies they will be known only through discourse about them. Many of these characters recur throughout history, reindividuated in both famous and ordinary people (Brummett and Bowers 161).

They further believe: "Homologies in discourse create these particular manifestations of types; one may say that a standard or stock persona is a kind of

homology. It is not a question of who these people really are…" (in *Rhetorical Homologies* 161). In other words, as we engage in the process of ordering our world and creating our identities, we often draw upon various cultural personae at our disposal. These various personae are those "stock characters" of personalities that exist within society such as saints, outlaws, and cowboys that often are a mainstay of popular culture (*Rhetorical Homologies* 161).

Further, as I discussed in chapter two, other scholars such as Raymond Gozzi and Neal Gabler assert that because mass mediated images are so prevalent, in contemporary society, we have begun to view our lives in more dramatic terms such that we view ourselves as *characters* within our own life dramas (Gozzi 4, 77; Gabler 192-205). If Gozzi and Gabler are correct in this assessment, then we can begin to see how these characters might be based on readily-available cultural personae. Therefore, in analyzing how people create identity, it is first important to note that people may draw upon these various existing cultural personae in the creation of their identities.

A critic will need to utilize the method of rhetorical homology to trace whether in a text or experience, a particular persona or various personae are being used in the establishment of identities. Moreover, if people are drawing upon cultural personae, the evidence derived from this method may tell the critic more about the culture or society as a whole as far as those personalities or types that are valued, privileged, well-respected, and/or status quo, Likewise, it will illuminate those types of characters that are considered to be dangerous, on the fringe of society, and/or disempowered.

If a critic uses a *macro* approach, he would begin by tracing the characteristics of a rhetorical homology of persona to see how this persona operates culturally, socially, and rhetorically and whether its meaning appears to be historically-contingent because this may provide evidence as to how persona shapes what we think about various

identities and how these views may change over time with various political and social implications. As stated earlier, while rhetorical homologies allow us to view meanings on a deeper level, this approach avoids SCIP essentialism because it does not root this meaning in one social category. Therefore, a critic would want to follow these steps in undertaking a macro approach:

1. Search for "disparate experiences that appear to be ordered together by discursive structures" identifying "the broad outline of the homology." (43-45).

As Brummett advances: "A given action, object, or event may fall into more than one, probably not an infinite number of structures" (43). While on an abstract level a "homological pattern will often be in narrative form," they also may take the form of "tropes, patterns of exigence and response, structures of alliance, opposition, domination and subordination," "transformation," or can be "based on the mechanisms of a particular rhetorical device" (43). While the SCIP approach would root meaning in a single category of identity, rhetorical homologies allow for more than one meaning to be possible in a given text or experience. Therefore, in looking at rhetorical homologies of personae, a critic would answer the following questions in order to determine if a text or experience is being structured in a particular way and if that way is homological which would help him begin to further understand its meaning:

- Does the overall structure governing the text appear to be a homology? If so, what are the characteristics of the homology?
- Can the discursive structure that orders the homology be labeled as a persona?
- If so, what persona (e) is ordering the experiences or texts?
- What are the characteristics of that persona (e)?

2. *Search for "significant inclusions and exclusions within the formal set defined by the homology"(44).*

Brummett explains that these inclusions and exclusions can happen both intentionally or unintentionally "as the byproduct of unintentional historical developments," yet they nevertheless have a rhetorical effect (44). Further, following Foucault's method of discursive analysis in, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: "One shows how the different texts with which one is dealing refer to one another, organize themselves into a single figure, converge with institutions and practices, and carry meanings that may be common to a whole period… because each discourse contains the power to say something other than what it actually says…" (118). An SCIP approach would mainly construct meaning based upon the "face-value" of a primary social category whereas rhetorical homologies allow the critic to not only look at "face-value," but also what is not included in various categories that may have deeper meanings under the surface. As such, one would need to search for, not only what is included in the text or experience, but also what is excluded from it because it is often what is missing or incongruous that provides the critic with the most significant or interesting findings:

- Are there ruptures or breaks in the persona (e)?
- Is there an element that is missing from the persona (e)?

3. Search for "the ways in which the 'content' of specific experiences ordered by a homology is transferred by the vulnerability created through formal linkage to other members of the homology" (44).

Brummett argues that the content also can have a rhetorical effect because it may offer people advice as to how to characterize and deal with certain experiences (44-45). He further explains that the content of a text combined with its medium may enhance the homology (45). In other words, homologies go beyond SCIP because they may

demonstrate how the various elements of social style and social categories impact how we characterize situations.

- Does the content of the particular persona (e) have an impact on other parts of the homology such as social style? The answer to this question will help the critic to determine the influence that the homology may have on how people characterize it and/or social styles that resemble it.

4. "…consider ways in which the accretions of history as well as discursive structural changes alter the homology"(45).

Brummett argues that the critic must consider the fact that changes in history and culture can also change the way that homologies are viewed and also may influence the pattern itself (45). In this sense, this approach also allows the critic to account for and examine how developments in history and social changes over time impact how we view personae while avoiding the fixation associated with SCIP notions.

- How do historical and cultural changes affect the ways that people view the persona (e) and/or overarching homological structure? The answer to this question will help the critic determine how personae may change over time due to culture or history and/or how meanings can shift and change over time.

Overall, the *macro* approach, or examination of rhetorical homologies of personae, will help the critic to identify and understand possible cultural resources that people may utilize to create their identities as well as the broader, structural significance of various personae within society. This approach also allows us to see how changes occur over time while not limiting or rooting identity creation to a primary social category. Again, a critic could stop here at a macro level or if wanting to see how a rhetorical homology of persona may help to create a particular social style, then he would

need to next follow the steps, one to five, as outlined under the social style section. However, each of the two examined areas raises larger questions about the creation and maintenance of identity as well as its social significance.

- How do social style and persona (e) function in the overall creation of identity?
- How does this identity relate to other identities?
- Is there a formal linkage between this identity and others? If so, what impact might this have on those other identities?
- What are the social and political effects of this creation of identity?

Now, I will turn to the kinds of texts that critics could examine in utilizing this method to analyze how social styles create identities.

KINDS OF TEXTS THAT CRITICS WOULD NEED TO EXAMINE

To study identity as manifested through social styles, I propose that scholars would want to investigate the following kinds of texts: 1) People because they are the embodiment of various identities; 2) Commodities because people often use them to construct, present, and learn various identities and representations; 3) Movies and television because these media often are where identities and representations are constructed, presented, and learned through the use of various styles; and 4) Magazines and advertisements because these texts also are where representations of various identities are constructed, presented, and learned. In choosing the various texts for examination scholars would want to find texts that seem socially and culturally relevant. In other words, the texts chosen should be those that seem most likely to generate significant findings about identity on a structural level culturally, socially, politically and/or materially. Now, I will point out how this method works using the celebrity Madonna as a brief example of how one would approach this text.

BRIEF EXAMPLE OF THE METHOD AT WORK: THE SOCIAL STYLE OF MADONNA

In analyzing how a celebrity like Madonna manages her identity within popular culture, an SCIP approach would root her identity in one primary social category such as her gender and assert that her politics is a direct result of being a woman. Yet using the method of rhetorical personae, one could argue that she seems to utilize different homologies of personae at various points throughout her career in which she complicates, disrupts, and plays with notions of gender, class, and sexuality in ways that go beyond the simplistic SCIP category of "woman." In doing so, the critic would begin with a micro approach (social style) and move to a macro approach (rhetorical homologies of personae) to determine how her social styles resemble cultural personae. The reason that this choice of text might be socially and culturally relevant is that many people utilize celebrities, like Madonna, in formulating or creating their own identities. In other words, people may borrow from Madonna's presentations of self in order to rhetorically construct their own identities. Therefore, this text would be a prime example for understanding how social styles can be used rhetorically to create various identities.

Beginning with a *micro* approach, first the critic would try to find the four dimensions of social style that are included or excluded in the text, how they relate to each other, if these create a homology of style and/or whether this social style seems to resemble any cultural personae. Next, moving to a *macro* perspective and proposing that Madonna mainly seems to use the personae of saint and sinner as contrasting forms of identity, the critic would need to outline the broad scope of these homologies by providing details as to the characteristics of both. Next, the critic would search for inclusions and exclusions between the two areas of personae and social style. Then, the critic would analyze how content impacts the formal linkages and how history and cultural changes impact these areas. Finally, the critic would analyze how the two areas

function in the creation of Madonna's identities, how these identities relate to others, and the political and social implications of her creation of these various identities.

In this chapter, I outlined a methodological framework that can be used to provide evidence as to the feasibility of polystylism as an alternative view of identity. I began with an overview of the foundation for my methodology by drawing upon and augmenting Brummett's theory of rhetorical homology limiting this focus to rhetorical homologies of personae. I also fused this theory with polystylism and the work of scholar Dick Hebdige to suggest that in examining whether polystylism is a feasible approach to analyzing identity scholars could use a micro (social style) or macro (rhetorical homologies of personae) approach. Finally, I discussed the kinds of texts that critics would want to study as well as offered a brief example how one could approach the text of Madonna. Now, I will provide a preview of the application chapters that will follow in Part II of this dissertation.

PREVIEW OF THE PART II-ILLUSTRATIONS/APPLICATIONS AND RATIONALE FOR CHOSEN TEXTS

In the next section of this dissertation, I turn to two applications to demonstrate how the rhetoric of social style functions in the creation of identities. Utilizing the method as outlined in this chapter, I will analyze the following texts: 1) the transgender text of "Buck Angel," who lives his life as a man, yet is genetically a woman and 2) two political dynasties, the Kennedys and the Bushes. I have chosen these texts because they are multifaceted demonstrating the prevalence of the use of social style in two different contexts that range from the personal realm of identity creation and maintenance that some would label as "extreme" to traditional political presentations of self. The first application, a transgendered individual probably applies to a smaller number of people in the creation of identity, or what some would label an "alternative" identity, whereas the

second comparing political families offers a more traditional, or what some would label "mainstream," sense of how many people may utilize social style in creating identities. However, they both offer insight into the ways in which identity in contemporary society is based on fluidity and transgression while simultaneously having political and social ramifications.

Therefore, in the next chapter to explore how identity creation often is a personal issue, I will move from a micro to macro approach to examine "Buck Angel," and analyze how transgendered people create and manage their identities through the use of social styles as well as physical transformations. Arguing that he draws upon the cultural persona of a biker outlaw, I assert that through the rhetorical performance of social style, Buck Angel plays with and calls into question notions of gender, masculinity, femininity, sexuality, and desire. Therefore, in this chapter, I also will explore the social and political implications of transgendered identities and how these identities may impact how we generally consider identity construction in contemporary society.

Ch. 4- A Transgressing Social Style: Buck Angel—"The Man with a Pussy"

> "Because I know how people are, and if it's not black and white, it's freaky. I don't fit in any particular man or woman situation, though I consider myself 110 percent man. I think it's fascinating that people are taught that you're basically who you are because of your genitals. That is ridiculous! So you are a woman because you have a vagina and I'm a woman because I have a vagina? Genitals do not make the gender"—Buck Angel, quoted in *Time Out New York*

Rhetorical scholar John Sloop, in the article "A Van with a Bar and a Bed': Ritualized Gender Norms in the John/Joan Case," argues that our notions of gender and sexuality are constrained by the "binaristic system" of cultural discourses that surround us (131). He asserts that even when it comes to issues of transgender, which have the potential to disrupt these binary norms, scholars and others still fall back on essentialist notions or what I label an SCIP approach ("A Van" 131; "Disciplining" 168). While agreeing with Sloop's argument, I nevertheless maintain that there is the potential to move beyond these rigid "binary norms" in the creation of identities. Here, I offer a text, Buck Angel, that not only opposes the SCIP approach, but provides strong evidence for the theory of polystylism which suggests that through the rhetorical performance of social style, it is possible for people to create identities that are polycategorical and fluid, yet still unified.

If someone saw Buck Angel on the street, he or she would most likely assume that Buck belongs to that famous group of angels—Hell's Angels—the notorious motorcycle gang (Doorne 58). Buck is a burly man with a shaved head, thick Fu Manchu, and numerous tattoos all over his body who occasionally has a cigar dangling from his mouth. Yet, Buck Angel is no Hell's Angel. He[20] is a porn star who, due to genetics, some would

[20] Throughout this chapter, I will refer to Buck Angel in the way that he describes himself meaning that I will use the pronoun "he."

label a woman. Although his identity is constrained by cultural discourses, I argue that through the rhetorical performance of social style Buck Angel not only is able to disrupt the rigid binary norms surrounding gender and sexuality, he *transgresses* them by creating a polycategorical identity at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and class. By performing a hyper-masculine biker outlaw persona *and* claiming his transgender status, Buck Angel unsettles notions of masculinity, femininity, sexual orientation, and desire thus allowing for play, fluidity, multiplicity and more complex views of these social categories in the practice of identity construction. In turn, I assert his identity interrogates the degree to which our performances of identity can be both socially constrained, yet allow for multiplicity and a "loosening" of rigid binaries (Sloop, "Disciplining" 170, 183-184).

In this chapter, I begin with an overview of definitions of sex, gender, transsexual, and transgender as well as how I will use them throughout this chapter. Next, I will discuss arguments about the politics of transgender identities, hypothesize how the SCIP approach would label transgendered individuals (and specifically Buck Angel as a text), and suggest that one way to move beyond SCIP within transgender politics is through polystylism. Despite the fact that he is an "extreme" example, I next suggest why Buck is an ideal text for analyzing how our identities possess fluidity in a world of polystyle. Next, I turn briefly to his biography and some of its political implications. Then, I will apply the methodology outlined in chapter three to the text by using a *micro* to macro approach. Moving from his performance of social style to a rhetorical homology of persona, I will argue that Buck's rhetorical performance of self creates a "biker outlaw" or "rebel" persona that transgresses SCIP notions of identity. Finally, I analyze the overall rhetorical, social, and political implications of Buck Angel as a text by giving a brief overview of audience responses, how this particular identity creation calls into

question rhetorical performances of self in general, and how this example provides evidence against SCIP and in favor of the theory of polystylism as well as previewing the next chapter.

GOING BEYOND HE OR SHE: DEFINING TRANSGENDER

As Leslie Feinberg argues in *Transgender Warriors: Making History From Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*, "Under Western law, doctors glance at the genitals of an infant and pronounce the baby female or male, and that's that" (x). This attribution of male or female according to physical characteristics commonly is referred to as a person's *sex*. On the other hand, Feinberg offers that "…in dominant Western cultures, the *gender* expression of babies is assumed at birth: pink for girls, blue for boys; girls are expected to grow up feminine, boys masculine" (emphasis added x). That is to say, a person's sex usually is considered in biological terms while gender often is viewed as a product of culture.[21] It is important to note that whether or not people refer to sex (i.e. the biological construction) or gender (i.e. the cultural construction), they usually do so from a binarist approach in which there are rigid dichotomies between male/female, men/women, and masculinity/femininity. In other words, this binarist approach directly links to SCIP views such that a person's gender and sex determine his or her behaviors, sexuality, and the political issues that he or she supports with one (i.e. male) being the direct opposite of the other (i.e. female).

However, as Claudine Griggs points out in *S/He: Changing Sex and Changing Clothes*, because people often refer to sex and gender interchangeably, she uses the term "attributed gender" to refer to sex stating: "Gender attribution is generally immediate, unconscious, and dimorphic. And it carries contiguous rules about masculine/feminine

[21] Following Feinberg's argument, I assert that: "I don't take a view that an individual's gender expression is exclusively a product of either biology or culture" (xii).

protocol, which are also immediate, unconscious, and dimorphic" (1). Following Griggs, I will use the term "attributed gender" to refer to the way that people are characterized according to their physical characteristics as well as the assumptions that people make in labeling others based upon these physical characteristics such as genitalia, physical build, and appearance. In this sense, the SCIP approach also characterizes people according to attributed gender and uses it as the determining factor of a person's political stance.

Complicating the definitions of sex and gender, Feinberg explains that people who are *transsexual* "…traverse the boundary of the *sex* they were assigned at birth" and people who are *transgender* "traverse, bridge, or blur the boundary of the *gender expression* they were assigned at birth" (x). Stating, "I've been called a he-she, butch, bulldagger, cross-dresser, passing woman, female-to-male transvestite, and drag king," Feinberg asserts: "The word I prefer to use to describe myself is *transgender*" and following Feinberg, I will use the term transgender throughout this chapter (x). As I will address further later in this chapter, because the SCIP approach only considers sex and gender from a dualist perspective, transgender which blurs notions of gender often disrupts this rigid dichotomy which some people find troubling because they are not able to think beyond these binary notions. Because this binarist perspective only privileges two attributed gender categories, transgender individuals are both politically marginalized and often silenced because they do not easily fit into the categories of male or female.

Historically, Feinberg claims, transgendered people always have existed and within earlier cultures, such as some Native American nations, "such individuals were held in high esteem" (21-29). However, because they blur the distinctions between sex and gender and/or the male/female dichotomy, many transgender people have been victims of persecution and murder, ostracized, arrested, and unaccepted (Feinberg 1-9; Griggs 1-23). Recently, the subject of transgender identity has become a mainstay of

popular media. It is a focus in films such as *The Crying Game* (1992), *Boys Don't Cry* (1999) and most recently *TransAmerica* (2005) (Internet Movie Database). It is a focus in the news such as a *New York Times* article, "About a Boy Who Isn't," that details the life of a 7th grade girl interacting with her classmates and living as a boy (2). It also the subject of television talk shows such as *The Jerry Springer Show* and *The Maury Povich Show*. Yet, when transgendered individuals are featured in popular media, such as talk shows, often it is for "shock-value" where they are represented as confused about their "true" identities, deceiving others about their "true" genders, and/or as "freaks" because they do not fit into rigid categories of man or woman. Again, the popular media also seem to be reifying the SCIP view because a person who is not easily labeled as a "man" or a "woman" is going against his or her "essence" or "true nature."

Since the 1990s, the study of transgender has come to the forefront within academia as Vernon Rosario, in "Transgenderism Comes of Age," pronounces: "Transgender Studies has taken off in the past ten years and is in many ways on the cutting edge of academic studies" (32). In these scholarly studies, most of the research on transgender has been auto-ethnographic or ethnographic where researchers share their personal experiences and/or the experiences of others. It also is an emerging area in rhetorical criticism as undertaken by scholar John Sloop. While it would be beyond the scope of this dissertation to recount all of the literature on transgender, here I want to present a few studies that address political implications of transgenderism.

THE POLITICS OF TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES

The right to decide one's gender has become a political issue and many scholars discuss the impact that transgendered identities have had on how we view sex, sexuality, gender, masculinity and femininity, and a host of other public and private arenas. As Katrina Roen argues in " 'Either/Or' and 'Both/Neither': Discursive Tensions in

Transgender Politics: "Contemporary transgender politics are informed by postmodern conceptions of subjectivity, queer understandings of sexuality and gender, radical politics of transgression, and the poststructuralist deconstruction of binaries (such as man/woman and mind/body)"(502). She claims that there are two kinds of arguments made within transgender politics.

The first group sees "passing" as another gender as the ultimate goal which she labels as the "either/or" argument whereas the second group argues that individuals should claim their transgender status in order to challenge the dominate mode of an "either/or" position and instead adopt a "both/neither" stance (502-505). Roen recommends: "Both/neither refers to a transgender position of refusing to fit within the categories of woman and man" believing that there needs to be a move away from this kind of dichotomy (505). This argument over transgender identities seems to echo the issue that I raised in chapter one with the "either/or" approach as another version of SCIP while the "both/neither" side seeks to unravel these constraints of naming and positioning. Even with identities that are not transgender, the "either/or" and "both/neither" approaches are relevant because they question the very foundations of meaning about definitions of man and woman. In other words, many people who identify as a man or woman question the rigid definitions by which these categories are classified.

As Richard Levine avows in "Crossing the Line": "The havoc that a strictly bipolar system wreaks most directly on transgender people, but also on the rest of us…" is repeatedly a focus in discussions about transgender and gender itself (43). In fact, one of the most consistent political and personal issues that arises for transgender individuals is the process of naming and all the implications that this entails. Claudine Griggs makes this point evident saying that the way in which people attribute a person's gender will determine their interactions with the individual especially through the use of pronouns

such as “he” or “she”(64-69, 1-3). She further explains that people feel frustrated when they are not sure if a person easily can be categorized as “man” or “woman” and this tension can create hostility which can sometimes lead to violence and/or death as in the case of Brandon Teena and others (64-69, 1-3).

Again, this labeling is based on SCIP in which a person is either a man or a woman and as a result judgments are made about the person’s masculinity or femininity and the appropriateness of his or her behaviors. Similarly, these same issues with labeling apply to people who are not transgender in the sense that if a person is labeled as a man or woman, then that person’s behaviors are supposed to reflect his or her attributed gender category and if he or she does not exhibit those behaviors, then many people find this problematic.

For example, in *S/He: Changing Sex and Changing Clothes*, Claudine Griggs relays a story that in 1977 after having started hormone replacement therapy and living as a woman, she was in a restaurant having a beer wearing “jeans, a football style jersey shirt, tennis shoes and no makeup. My hair was down to the middle of my back, but absolutely straight, which was a popular style” when a male customer entered, sat beside her, and assumed that she was a man as well (21). He then, “began talking to me in a rougher than normal manner, and it was clear that he perceived me as male” discussing topics with her such as the weather and sports (Griggs 21). However once this male customer heard the bartender address Claudine as a she (i.e. “hon”) and realized that she was a woman, he apologized profusely, seemed shocked and changed his tone to a “now gentler and noticeably less abrupt manner”(21). Consequently, he begins to give her advice about how to sit properly (i.e. ladylike), wear some makeup, and fix her hair (21-22). Griggs explains that it became evident that he now saw her as a potential sexual partner instead of just a drinking buddy (22).

Reiterating this point, she states: "…One may see an 'effeminate man,' 'faggot,' 'he-man,' 'mannish woman,' 'dyke,' or 'Stepford-wife,' but the person will be perceived as male or female and from that underlying premise will rise options about the displayed qualities of masculinity or femininity" (Griggs 1). John Sloop, in " 'A Van with a Bar and a Bed': Ritualized Gender Norms in the John/Joan Case," makes the same argument that after a circumcision accident where John was surgically reconstructed to become a girl (i.e. Joan): "The assumption [John] Money [a researcher] is making here is that given a female body and raised as a girl, John/Joan would naturally choose a male partner" demonstrating that these assumptions about male/female and masculinity/femininity are steeped in heteronormativity (138). Again, even someone who identifies as a man or woman faces assumptions about his or her sexual orientation, which also tend to privilege a heteronormative view.

Some transgendered people themselves also seem to stress the importance of naming and labeling whether they prefer to be called he or she, legally changing their names, and/or claiming identity as transgendered with some wanting a new label for gender altogether (Griggs 40-41, Feinberg x). These decisions have political implications because through the choice of a new legal name and/or sexual reassignment surgery (SRS), some transgender individuals could be seen as reproducing the rigid binaristic system of "either/or" in that one has to be one gender or the other following the SCIP approach. The same issue of naming and labeling is important for non- transgender identities as well because their choices of naming also can reproduce the SCIP view.

The issue of "passing" and/or transitioning to a new gender also has several political and social implications. Some transgender individuals impart that even if they do take on a new attributed gender, people who knew them before the change will refer to them by the previous attributed gender. For example, Claudine Griggs states when she

was twenty-one years old and bumped into her aunt and grandmother ten months after her attributed gender change, her aunt still referred to her as a "he" and by the nickname "Tony" (66). Similarly, Griggs explains that she also had difficulty in recognizing a female-to-male, (FTM), she was interviewing as a female child instead of the grown man sitting in front of her. As such, Griggs claims: "…I found it difficult to grasp emotionally that the grammar school or high school pictures were earlier representations of the 34-year-old man sitting in my living room"(67). Again, we find a replication of the binaristic system, which seems like people cannot escape it.

From a rhetorical standpoint, following Sloop's argument, these examples point to the ways in which gender, within cultural discourse, often is discussed in terms of binaries between man and woman regardless of whether or not a person or researcher argues that gender is biologically or culturally determinant. In " 'A Van with a Bar and a Bed': Ritualized Gender Norms in the John/Joan Case," he states: "In short, even if one deconstructs the sex-gender differentiation with [Judith] Butler on a *theoretical* level, arguments over the case provide a body of public and scientific discourse which consistently offers ritualized reiterations of a binaristic system of sex-based, male-female differences" (131). In other words, Sloop points out that gender as a product of discourse is culturally-constrained by the ways in which it is discussed through the appropriation of "norms" about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. These appropriations of norms also have political, social, and material consequences because they act as forms of social constraint such that a person who does not display "appropriate" behaviors may be subjected to punishment, ostracism, public embarrassment, and/or even murder.

He also states that this kind of discourse about gender "consistently illustrated the lack of complexity that Judith Butler points to…"("A Van" 131). In his article,

"Disciplining the Transgendered: Brandon Teena, Public Representation, and Normativity," he further exposes why rhetorically it is so difficult for people to escape these ways of discussing gender in discourse stating:

> Hence while cases of gender ambiguity obviously have the potential to cause 'gender trouble' and disrupt bigender normativity, in terms of the 'dominant' discussions that surround such cases, [like Brandon Teena] critics would be well served by thinking through the ways that the 'loosening of gender binarisms' is a potential that often goes unrealized for many audiences (168).

In other words, Sloop points out the ways in which we are shaped by and products of the discourses that surround us which means that people sometimes rely on binaries to discuss gender because: "Each of these themes… [In the discourses surrounding Brandon Teena] highlight the ideology of gender and sexuality in contemporary culture, laying bare the ways that transgenderism and gender fluidity continue to be disciplined back into binary norms" ("Disciplining" 170). Sloop, therefore, seems to argue that while researchers and others may intend to move beyond SCIP, they largely are unable to do so because these ways of thinking and labeling are so restricted and influenced by the discourses of sexuality and gender that pervade our culture. Likewise, these notions are reinforced by a politics steeped in SCIP because it frames the majority of political issues as a direct outgrowth of this primary identity based on gender or sexuality. Now, I want to demonstrate some of the ways that the SCIP approach would consider transgender identities and specifically how binarists might label Buck Angel as a text.

THE SCIP APPROACH TO TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES AND BUCK ANGEL AS A TEXT

As I alluded to in chapter one, because the SCIP approach is steeped in rigid binaries, there would be no room for transgender identities, which *transgress* gender categories. That is to say, transgender individuals, by SCIP standards, would have to be defined as either a "man" or a "woman." These binaries of man versus woman would be

considered as inherently different from each other and would most likely be based on genetics where a man would be defined as such because he has a penis and a woman would be labeled as such because she has a vagina. Issues of masculinity or associated categories would be linked with man and issues of femininity and associated categories would be linked with woman. Moreover, these categories of femininity and masculinity would be considered direct opposites and essentially true.

In other words, SCIP does not support another category of gender (i.e. transgender) that is beyond the binary of man versus woman or for a fluidity of meanings such that woman does not have to equal femininity and man does not have to equate to masculinity. Politically, these binarist views of gender also serve to empower and disempower various groups while completely leaving out (and therefore silencing) a whole host of other individuals who do not neatly fit into these categorizations.

From this perspective, it seems that the SCIP approach could categorize Buck Angel in two ways that are both steeped in binary oppositions of woman or man. [22] First, it could label Buck Angel as a woman because he has a vagina. Therefore, his appearance as man would be incongruous to his "true" identity. All of his behaviors that are not "feminine" also would be deemed as being incongruous to his being a woman based on his genitalia. Similarly, the SCIP approach could categorize Buck Angel as a man because he looks like a man. Therefore, his vagina would be incongruous to this "core identity" and would be something that he would need to correct by undergoing more sex reassignment surgery so that he is a man in all aspects. However, as stated before the SCIP approach would require that Buck be *either* a man or a woman and not both because there is no room for a third category of gender. In this sense, Buck's choice of gender also is a political choice because he will either belong to the "dominant,

[22] Because there is no SCIP study on Buck Angel as a text this is conjecture on my part.

privileged" male contingent or the "disempowered, underprivileged" female contingent according to SCIP arguments.

From the SCIP view, a person's sexual orientation would either be labeled as heterosexual or homosexual and these would stem from essentialized notions of desire. If a person is heterosexual, he or she would desire the opposite gender category and if homosexual, he or she would desire the same gender category. Remember, as John Sloop points out the SCIP approach often is rooted in privileging heterosexuality over homosexuality or leaning toward heteronormativity, but some SCIP perspectives as I mentioned earlier in chapter one privilege homosexuality instead ("A Van" 138). Nevertheless, what is important is that sexual orientation from SCIP is limited to a dichotomy of either "straight" or "gay." Therefore, according to SCIP Buck Angel would have to be either a heterosexual or homosexual. Again, politically Buck would either belong to the "privileged, dominant" heterosexual mainstream or the "underprivileged, marginalized" heterosexual alternative from the SCIP stance.

SCIP also would root a person's *primary* identity in either gender or sexual orientation such that a person's political stance would be assumed to flow from whether he or she was a man or woman or heterosexual or homosexual. In other words, a man who is heterosexual would be seen as having politics based on his gender while a man who is homosexual would be seen as having a politics based on his sexual orientation. Furthermore, the SCIP view privileges or roots identity in one social category over another. Therefore, Buck's politics would either come from his being a woman, (or a man depending on how SCIP defines him), or being a heterosexual or homosexual. Thus, the SCIP approach allows no room for multiple categories of identity, for politics to be influenced across these multiple categories, or for politics to stem from places other than a primary identity category. Yet, I believe that because he is transgender, Buck Angel

disrupts, blurs, and plays with social categories in the construction of his identity such that he allows us an alternative perspective to the SCIP view.

I also assert that rhetorically the issue of transgender as a whole helps us to further disrupt "dominant discussions" about gender and sexuality such that while we may only have language to describe the world around us the discussion of gender in terms of binaries is not one that *has to be* "rigid" or "static" because language holds within it the potential for transformation and fluidity. In moving away from this dichotomy of gender, many draw upon the work of Judith Butler who argues that our genders and identities are largely the result of our performances of them and not merely rooted in either biology or culture.

As stated earlier in chapter two, in *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler argues that gender is largely performative and does not exist outside of our performances of it (25). She believes that this creation of gender is one that is done through practice and repetition of those performances (31-32). Instead of viewing gender as biological or completely cultural, she believes we should label gender as *a strategy* because there is no inherent gender (emphasis added 139-140). As such Butler argues, "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender…"(25). She calls for a complex understanding of performativity explaining: "These oppositions [between biologically-determinant and culturally-determinant views of gender and sexuality] do not describe the complexity of what is at stake in any effort to take account of the conditions under which sex and sexuality are assumed. The 'perfomative' dimension of construction is precisely the forced reiteration of norms" (*Bodies* 94-95). As Sloop, in extending Butler, also submits: "… to posit gender and gender behaviors as performative is to see it as 'a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism…'"which also is sometimes reified

through cultural discourses ("A Van" 131). As such in viewing gender, there is a need for discussing the disruption of norms as well as how we are socially, rhetorically, and/or politically constrained and one way to address this complexity of gender that Butler suggests is by looking at how it operates as a performance.

While previous research on transgender has discussed the idea of performativity, I believe that the theoretical and methodological framework of polystylism would augment this research because it may shed light on how the area of performance rhetorically combines with other dimensions of social style to create identities that people may employ strategically based on socially-dependent situations. Further, this perspective, with it grounding in rhetoric and communication, may help us to see how we create, manage, and communicate meanings about our identities that are sometimes constrained by cultural discourses at our disposal. As I will demonstrate, each of these debates over gender, transgenderism, sexuality, desire, performativity, identity construction, and dominant cultural discourses, are widespread and come to a head in the case of Buck Angel and it is for these reasons that I will explore him as a text.

Moreover, while some may argue that Buck Angel is an "extreme" example of identity construction, I maintain that this kind of extremity would not have been possible forty years ago as Buck Angel mainly would have been considered a carnival act and/or "freak." As stated earlier, there is a rise in popular cultural representations of transgender identities in television, film, literature, and they are even the subject of everyday conversations whereas before these kinds of identities largely would have been invisible. In other words, I believe that these kinds of identity changes also are becoming more prevalent thus making them less extreme and more acceptable.

In the same vein while many people may not be changing their genders, plastic surgery is considered a mainstream endeavor undertaken by many people,[23] and while they may not go as far as Buck Angel in their self-transformations, it nevertheless is considered an ordinary activity whereby people can reshape their physical appearances. That is to say, many people opt to have plastic surgery and this activity also is a focus of popular media programming such as Fox's *The Swan*, MTV's *I Want a Famous Face*, and ABC's *Extreme Makeover* to name a few. Finally, if these kinds of "extreme" changes or physical alterations are becoming more acceptable then it is reasonable to extend this argument to suggest that our abilities to play with and/or change our social styles (performances, language, use of commodities, and aesthetics) on a smaller scale also may be more commonplace[24]. Now I turn to a brief biography of Buck Angel as well as some of the political implications of his identity before turning to the methodological application.

UNCOVERING AN ANGEL: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF BUCK

Before discussing Buck's biography, I refer to an earlier work in which I argue that when a researcher undertakes a biography of a person "the best you can hope for is to create a verisimilar image of the person" because it is impossible for you to know the "real" person (Greene 15-16). Similarly following that previous work, I will not draw distinctions between Buck Angel as the "celebrity" and the "real" Buck Angel (Greene 16). Finally, in creating public identities, I argue that celebrities like Buck Angel have agency over these presentations of self[25] within the media (Greene 15).

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[23] According to a July 5, 2006 article "More People Getting Plastic Surgery with a Partner": "There were 10.2 million cosmetic procedures performed in 2005, up 11 percent from 2004" (ABC News.com)

[24] In the next chapter, I will examine more "mainstream" examples of two political dynasties.

[25] In creating this biography of Buck Angel, I will try as much as possible to use his own voice using a combination of various interviews and his personal Web site.

According to "Mind Over Matter," Beth Greenfield states that Buck Angel is a 43 year old "female-to-male trans guy" (par. 1). In discussing his background, Buck says that:

> I was born a female and lived many years as such. I would say I was not really 'feminine' but more on the tomboy/butch side. I was always hanging out with guys doing guy things. I loved to drink beer and get into fights, work on cars, and stuff like that. I never felt like a girl and none of my friends ever treated me that way either. I was always perceived as a guy by everyone--even my family. But in those times sex change operations were not really talked about, so I just suffered 'in the wrong body' which lead to major drug and alcohol problems (Buck Angel.com).

He also spent some time doing professional modeling as a woman, but states: "I was not loving life" because he wanted to be a man (Buck Angel.com) In the article, "Man Enough," Gregory Angelo reports that when Buck was a woman his former first name was Susan (par. 6). After viewing a movie with a female-to-male transgendered person, Buck says that he "realized that he no longer had to live that way,"(i.e. unhappy in a woman's body), and decided to undergo hormone therapy (Buck Angel.com).

Here, I believe that through his use of language, Buck seems to be reproducing the SCIP approach to gender. He claims that people "treated him like a guy" as opposed to how he looked (i.e. like a woman). He even stresses that he was not a very "feminine" woman linking gender with inherent qualities of femininity and defines himself in opposite terms such as saying he was "more on the tom*boy*/butch side" and liked to do "guy things" (emphasis added Buck Angel.com) Politically, this portrayal links to Katrina Roen's description of the "either/or" debate that arise in transgender politics in which some transgender individuals feel that they have to be either a man or a woman thus reproducing a binarist view.

In the article "Mangina Man: 'I Was Born a Woman," Buck notes that in 1996 he had his breasts removed stating: "I went to 10 surgeons before I found the right one

because I really didn't want to have scars… The whole point of having surgery was to be able to take my shirt off *and have nobody notice*" (emphasis added qtd. in Doorne 58-59). After the hormone therapy and surgery Buck states: "As you can see I have become the man I have always wanted to be…it's a fucking dream come true!" (Buck Angel.com). However, in order to maintain his current muscular appearance, he states that he spends: "Two hours a day, five days a week" in the gym, yet: "Building up muscle is much harder for me because I have to shoot myself with 1cc of testosterone every two weeks, because I don't have nuts" (qtd. in Doorne 62). Finally, rather than opting for phalloplasty, Buck decided to keep his vagina claiming: "…That is because genital surgery does not work in terms of functioning…It's [surgery] getting a lot better, but looks-wise it's not great and expense-wise it's $70,000. I mean what the hell? I could buy myself a nice ride…" (qtd. in Doorne 59-60). Legally, however, Buck is labeled as a male claiming: "I had a legal sex-change. I am legally male" (qtd. in Doorne 61).

Relying on a SCIP notion of gender, Buck decides to change his physical appearance to "match" his desired attributed gender and wants to be able "to pass" as male through this physical reconstruction of having his breasts removed, using hormone therapy, and working out to build up muscles at the gym. He legally changes his name as a result which could be viewed, according to Roen's argument, as another form of "passing." However, he does not undergo full sexual reassignment surgery, (i.e. phalloplasty), because of the cost and especially due to issues with functionality. In other words, although Buck chooses to undergo surgery and a name change, he does not completely follow the SCIP approach due to his class status and desire.

Buck reveals that his family was very supportive of his decision to become a man stating: "I think my parents were kind of twisted by it but at the same time they were very OK with me being a boy. They called me by a boy name all my life. I was always treated

like a boy" (qtd. in Doorne 59). Ironically, Buck explains that his parents seemed more disturbed when he came out as a lesbian in his early twenties, before discovering he was transgendered claiming: "When I came out as a lesbian my parents were not happy, but when I told them I was having a sex change to be a man, they were 100 per cent behind me. I think it was easier for them to have a son than it was to have a dykey daughter. How twisted is that?" (qtd. in Doorne 59). However, he identifies his sexual orientation as bisexual saying that he enjoys having sex with both men and women (qtd. in Doorne 62).

Interestingly, here Buck provides another view of SCIP from his parents' perspective who seem to be caught in the binary of heterosexuality versus homosexuality. Privileging heterosexuality *over* gender, that they feel it is fine for Buck to undergo a sex change to become a man but it is wrong for him to be a lesbian. Buck himself reiterates the way he was raised from a binary stance claiming he was treated as a boy his whole life. Yet, in identifying his sexual orientation as "both/neither," Buck creates more fluidity and play with sexual desire rather than a strict dichotomy of either heterosexual or homosexual. That is to say, his desire seems to transgress or disrupt his strictly SCIP view of sex and gender which may be one of the reasons that he decides to become a part of the adult entertainment industry.

Before entering the adult entertainment industry as a performer, Buck worked as a dungeon-master in Los Angeles for around four years with his former partner Ilsa, Karen Ingrid Winslow, (a.k.a. Mistress Strix) who is a dominatrix (Doorne 62, Hiscock 12). Buck claims that he also: "…filmed dominatrix videos, foot-fetish videos and smoking videos before I got into doing my own porn" (qtd. in Doorne 62). On his Web site, Buck Angel.com, he reiterates this point saying that he first began working in the adult

entertainment industry behind the scenes creating "fetish videos and doing MTF websites."

Noticing that there were not many "mainstream" FTM movies or performers, he decided to enter the business and launched his own career with the Web site transsexual-man.com in February of 2003 (Buck Angel.com). He maintains that since that time his career has taken off stating: "In November of 2004, I signed a 12 picture deal with Robert Hill Releasing and have made porn history as the first FTM to be signed with a major studio!" (Buck Angel.com). Buck has made "porn history" by being in one of the first female-to-male and male-to-female sex scenes ("Buckaroo" 22). He indicates that one of his first releases, "Buck's Beaver" was nominated for an AVN award in January of 2006, but since that time, as of May 2006 he decided to leave Robert Hill Releasing due to legal disputes (Buck Angel.com). Some may wonder whether porn was the only option that he had as a FTM, however, Buck argues: "No way. A lot of transsexuals do get into porn because they think they don't have any other options. But transsexual women are exploited and treated as freaks and a lot of the titles of the videos are *Freak of Nature*, *Freaky Deaky*, whatever. You will never see that in any of my work. I took control of the situation from the get-go. I'm not being exploited at all" (qtd. Doorne 60). He also claims that with Robert Hill Releasing he had a great degree of control over his films saying:

> …But I said I wanted to write my own contract and have complete creative control over everything I do and they were totally OK with that. I direct the videos. I shoot the videos. I name the videos. I see everything before it goes to print…To sign a 12-picture deal after two years and be able to write my own contract and get a percentage of video sales is an awesome deal (qtd. in Doorne 61).

Politically, it seems that Buck's decision to become the first FTM adult performer operates on three different levels. First, Buck, perhaps seeing a financial opportunity, is using his transgender identity as a means of increasing his economic status. While some

may argue that he exploits himself for financial gain, I argue that because Buck maintains control over his image this act also could be seen as him having agency. Secondly, because there is a lack of representation of transgendered individuals, he decides to fill a void in mainstream films wanting the films to appeal to more general audiences and not just people who want to watch him because he is different. In other words, Buck could be seen as both "being out" as transgendered and simultaneously trying to present transgenderism as normal by stripping away its taboo as "freaky" or "weird." In the third instance, Buck operates politically and personally because he has *agency* over his representations in the films. He does not allow others to dictate sexual situations in which he is included, exploit his transgender status, or label his films in any way to position them and/or him as "abnormal."

Therefore, Buck exclaims that he enjoys working in the adult entertainment industry stating:

> Being a porn star is kind of fun for me, but it isn't really a big deal personally. It is kind of a means to an end. I don't always plan to be in front of the camera. It has long been my intention to return to the spot I started from, on the other side of the camera. I love making movies, and I plan to continue directing. My plan is to make movies with other FTMs in the spotlight. I stepped up to the plate to do it because there wasn't anyone else making "mainstream" FTM porn, and I realized there was a void, and I filled it. There is a huge industry of MTF (Shemale) porn, and so far, just me as the sole FTM doing what I do. I look forward to other guys like me being involved and really creating a genre of this type of porn (qtd. in Dean 2).

Here, for a second time he stresses both agency and a desire to increase the presence of FTMs in the adult entertainment industry. He also wants to bring other FTMs into the business as a means of making transgender more mainstream.[26] This proposal parallels some of the ways that other minority groups politically and socially have tried to influence their representations in media by increasing their presences (i.e. being seen

[26] Some also would argue that Buck wants to use FTMs in adult entertainment for financial game.

more) and then by taking further control over their images by becoming writers, producers, directors, etc. While Buck is in the adult entertainment industry, which some would still see as "alternative" media, he nevertheless is engaging in the same kind political work on a smaller scale.

Aside from working in porn, Buck maintains that he has a rich life outside of the industry. After separating from his wife Ilsa, he was recently married to a body-piercing artist Elayne Angel as well as relocating to Mexico ("Matrix"10; Visco 3-4). Buck says that although he is a porn star, he likes to keep his private life private stating: "I have a great fulfilling life outside of porn. My work is only one aspect of myself. But as Buck Angel the porn star, I don't really share much of my personal life with the public...."(qtd. in Dean 4). Like many celebrities, Buck seems to view his personal and public lives as separate. Therefore, he likewise tries to maintain agency over Buck Angel "the celebrity" and Buck Angel "the person."27 This separation additionally could be another way in which he protects himself, to some degree, from ridicule and ostracism due to his transgender status and his occupation which some would view as inappropriate or indecent.

In general, Buck's biography seems to parallel some other FTMs who follow an SCIP "either/or" argument saying that they felt they were not happy with their previous attributed gender, making a decision to undergo a change to their desired gender, and now live accordingly. However, one aspect that is different about Buck is that he goes beyond SCIP not only by claiming his transgender status, but also by performing in the adult entertainment industry as the first FTM porn star. Therefore, he puts his transgender body on display as a representation with several political implications. Since that I have

[27] Again, following my earlier work, I argue that we are performing whether we are in public or private so there is no way for us to know the "real" Buck Angel aside from his celebrity persona (15-16).

discussed some biographical information about Buck Angel, I will now turn to applying the theoretical and methodological framework of polystylism to this text by outlining his social style. Remember, in order to prove that the theory of polystylism is feasible I will have to demonstrate that Buck's use of social style is polycategorical and unified, is counter to SCIP definitions of gender and sexual orientation, and disrupts the binaries of both gender and sexuality by allowing for fluidity and play. Therefore, I will be looking for the ways in which his rhetorical performance of social style creates more fluidity within social categories, draws upon more than one social category, and constructs a multifaceted persona.

AN ANALYSIS OF BUCK ANGEL'S SOCIAL STYLE

In chapters two and three, I laid the groundwork for the method of polystylism that here I will apply using Buck Angel as an example. To analyze, his social style, I will look at a number of still images from his Web site, BuckAngel.com[28] as well as images from various interviews with the *Village Voice*, *Bizarre* magazine, and *Eros Zine: New York Erotica* magazine to name a few. Therefore, one limitation of this study is the fact that I am solely relying on the use of still images, which may be limited in capturing some aspects of his presentation of self such as voice, mannerisms, and/or gestures, for example.[29] Some also may argue that images, such as photographs, often are staged and therefore capture a skewed view of reality and/or a selection of reality. However, following Kenneth Burke, many of our visual experiences, images, and even our use of styles are "selections" of reality such that we may perceive them in different ways or when we are viewing something it is always a selection or "choice" of one view as opposed to other ways of seeing (*Language* 45).

[28] All images discussed herein are owned by the Web site Transsexual-man.com.
[29] One could also extend this example by looking at Buck Angel's performances in adult videos, however, that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

As stated previously in chapter two, social style consists of four dimensions including performance, use of language, commodities, and aesthetics. Again, in any given text, there may be one or a combination of these as well as one dimension might be more prevalent than the others. In the case of Buck Angel, I argue that each of the four dimensions functions in the creation of his social style. Overall, Buck seems to be creating a social style that is steeped in masculinity and an SCIP approach would view him in this way claiming that Buck tries or wants to pass as a man and therefore performs a masculine style.

However, I argue that Buck's social style creates a hyper-masculine biker outlaw or rebel persona, which he simultaneously challenges, disrupts, and scrutinizes, by claiming, displaying and drawing attention to his transgender status. In other words, through his rhetorical performance of social style to create a persona, Buck seems to open up the rigid social categories while at the same time to draw upon multiple categories (i.e. gender, class, and sexual orientation) to create a polycategorical yet unified identity that allows room for fluidity. Thus, Buck's performances are riddled with a sense of play about masculinity/femininity, sexual orientation, and probe the notion of desire. Here, I will discuss these dimensions of social style separately so it is easier to see how they function as well as pointing out how they overlap in the text. Now, I turn to the first dimension of Buck's social style, performance.

Performance

Although this study is limited by the use of still images, I nevertheless will discuss those areas of performance that can be ascertained from analyzing photographs of Buck Angel. The first thing that is noticeable about pictures of Buck Angel is his stance, which is usually in a commanding position. For example in a series of pictures from a July 13, 2004 issue of *Eros Zine: New York Erotica* magazine in several pictures Buck

stands with his arms sometimes crossed in front of him. Similarly, in a July 2005 issue of *Bizarre* magazine although his back is to the camera, Buck stands up with his head slightly turned looking over his shoulder. In other words, part of Buck's performance is created through the use of his posture, which seems to signal confidence, authority, and control.

Another aspect of his performance is his participation in various tasks. In several images, Buck is shown weight lifting (in an image from Buck Angel.com), smoking a cigar (as shown in *Bizarre* magazine July 2005 and *Eros Zine*), or giving someone a tattoo (as shown in *Eros Zine*). This activity on the part of Buck Angel may be a way to suggest his authority since he is "doing something" in each photo. It is possible that through this performance, he is demonstrating that he does activities that are commonly associated with men. From the SCIP perspective, Buck creates a performance of masculinity through his stance, which suggests authority, and his activities (i.e. weightlifting, smoking, etc.) In other words, he is "active" instead of "passive" which commonly is associated with masculinity versus femininity. Therefore, he may be showing that because he lifts weights, smokes, and gives tattoos, he is just a "regular guy" and the SCIP approach certainly would view him in this way.

However, Buck transgresses and complicates this notion of masculinity by drawing attention to the fact that he is transgendered. In several photos, Buck is either covering up or exposing his vagina. For example, in the *Village Voice* article "La Dolce Musto" Buck is completely nude aside from a leather jacket, which hangs down off his shoulders with the corner of the jacket covering his vagina. On his Web site, BuckAngel.com, one of the first images before entering the site is a picture of Buck lying on his side facing the camera with his underwear pulled down past his knees. Over his private region is a symbol that incorporates both the sign for men and women. In another

picture on the site, Buck is outdoors in front of a barn and truck leaning on the back seat of what appears to be a motorcycle. He is fully nude aside from leather gloves and the picture cuts off just above his private area.

Finally, in another picture from his Web site, he stands against a wall with his shirt open and pants partially open with his hands down his crotch. To some extent, these pictures seem to be drawing attention to his vagina by either covering it up with a symbol, his hands, or clothing, and/or by exposing it through his posture or stance which seems to trouble his being a "regular" guy. Here what we have is an attempt by Buck Angel to move beyond the SCIP view and strict definitions of man and masculinity. He claims and displays his transgender status in order to disrupt, analyze, and play with these rigid binaries. Politically, here he parallels Katrina Roen's argument of "both/neither" because from the waist up he looks like a man, but from the waist down some would label him a woman. I also think that rhetorically, this calls into question what it means to use labels to try to describe people and the assumptions that we make when we try to attribute gender to others and ourselves.

Many of Buck's facial expressions throughout the images seem to be challenging, quizzical, and somewhat "tongue-in-cheek" as he often wrinkles his forehead and raises an eyebrow to the camera. For example, in the weightlifting picture on his Web site, Buck's expression seems to parallel the famous scene and line from the 1976 film *Taxi Driver* in which actor Robert De Niro looks into the mirror and asks: "Are you talkin' to me?!" In other words, Buck seems to challenge his audience by directly staring at the camera and wrinkling his forehead. Similarly, in an *Eros Zine* image he wears army pants and a tank-top holding a riding crop and stares directly into the camera demonstrating authority. Finally, even when he has his back turned to the camera and is looking over his shoulder, in a *Bizarre* magazine spread; he raises an eyebrow as if to suggest a challenge.

Buck's facial expressions could be seen as another attempt to stress his dominance, but at the same time, there is a hint of whimsy and curiosity in his face as if he is asking his audience to consider this dominance.

As I will discuss in other parts of this essay, the most interesting part of Buck's performance is that it is homological which parallels Judith Butler's argument that our performances are ritualized and repeated (*Gender* 31-32). That is to say, he often has the same postures, gestures, clothing, facial expressions, etc. in his various images within the magazines and on his Web site. Another layer of his performances, although they are beyond the scope of the dissertation, is the fact that he performs in adult videos. These performances in pornography may align with and/or contrast with the photographs of Buck.

However, one aspect of these performances in adult videos that can be ascertained through the interviews is that he has sex with both men and women which further compounds his performance by problematizing both gender and sexuality (*Eros Zine* par. 2-3). Within these movies, Buck performs in a variety of sexual scenarios, with male and female partners, and his role ranges from "top" to "bottom"(Taromino par. 3). Thus, through these performances in adult films he creates fluidity and play across categories of gender and sexuality. In turn, he also plays with and disrupts heteronormativity *and* homosexuality by challenging the meanings of these labels about sexual orientation. Now, I turn to another aspect of Buck's social style, his use of language.

Use of Language[30]

Buck Angel's use of language may be characterized as direct and open. He often is very forthcoming with his views and/or in discussing his life as a FTM. For example, in an Adult F.Y.I.com interview in 2004, he states:

> There are she-males in the business, tranny girls and they used to be males…They had a sex change to a female. They just kept their cocks. I'm basically the complete opposite. I was born a female and I had a sex change to a male. I basically had a chest re-assignment surgery. I had surgery done on my chest. And I opted to keep my pussy. The surgery is horrifying. The cocks that they try to put on you are non functioning. They don't work. They have to do all these crazy skin grafts. You have basically a 50-50 chance of losing your orgasm. And you know what? I like my orgasm. I like having sex. So that was not an option. Basically what I do I take hormones. I take testosterone and I shoot myself every two weeks. Throughout the years my body changed. I lift weights and I work out. I just basically had a sex change" (Ross, par. 8).

Aside from having a direct, open style of speaking, Buck often uses words that some would label as "vulgar" or "coarse" such as "pussy," "cock," and "fuck" to name a few. For example, his trademark is "a man with a pussy" and this labeling can be seen as an attempt to once more be critical of SCIP (Buck Angel com). By saying he is a man and then "queering" or "troubling" this notion with "pussy," which sometimes is slang for vagina and therefore associated with woman, Buck creates another category that is "both/neither." He states that he is proud of who he is saying: "…but you don't need a cock to be a man. I think it's sad when guys like me don't feel like they are 100% male because they don't have the penis surgery. I want other guys to be able to feel as comfortable as I do in my skin"(qtd. in Doorne 60). This suggests that Buck also raises the inquiry of what it means to be a man seeming to posit whether the only requisite for

[30] Some of this use of language also can be ascertained by his comments in the biography section of this essay.

being a man is having a penis. Or, as Buck suggests does the definition of man go beyond genetics and mean something more? While the SCIP view would answer "no" to this proposition, Buck Angel's very presence indicates that the term "man" is more complex than previously considered.

Although he uses these kinds of "vulgar" words, Buck Angel does not sound uneducated. His language seems to parallel a working-class form of speaking in which he is educated, uses slang or "vulgar" words, but does not sound highly-educated. Here, Buck draws upon a third social category, class, to help construct his social style and identity. This "working-class" speech, politically and rhetorically, can be seen as a form of rebelling against upper-class notions of etiquette that would probably label this kind of speech to discuss sexuality and the subject of sex itself as taboo.

Even the name itself, "Buck Angel,"[31] conjures up various images with the way that he is utilizing language. Formally, "buck" is defined as: "The adult male of some animals, such as the deer, antelope, or rabbit," "A robust or high-spirited young man," an offensive term used to describe "A Native American or Black man," and is "An act or instance of bucking" according to Dictionary.com. "Buck" also suggests various connotations that are used in popular language or slang such as "buck wild," and/or "buck naked." In using the name "Buck," he could be referring to the slang terms that often are associated with sex.

In contrast, an "angel" is commonly associated with being a heavenly being and/or "a kind and loveable person" (Dictionary.com). In this sense, he could be drawing upon images of those celestial beings that are thought to be inherently good to suggest that he also is angelic. Interestingly, the use of "angel" makes one consider its opposite

[31] Here, I am not suggesting that I know the reasons that Buck Angel selected his name, but these connotations or associations are some of the possibilities for meaning based upon the definitions of the two words.

"devil," which may mean that Buck is trying to suggest he is a fallen angel or anything but angelic. Or, he could be linking his name to that of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang. Therefore, the name Buck Angel seems oxymoronic or "tongue-in-cheek" because he contrasts two very different types of behavior meaning on the one hand he is indicating that he is uninhibited, but at the same time he is a good person.

Rhetorically, we also can see that this "tongue-in-cheek" use of language parallels his performances. That is to say, he causes his audiences to question his identity meaning is he a buck, an angel, or both? If he is both, which he seems to suggest, then perhaps there is a place for transgendered identities after all despite SCIP views. Therefore, rhetorically the name is ironic painting a grey picture of Buck about his identity instead of an "either/or" black versus white SCIP approach. Thus, it seems likely that by invoking his name Buck wants to shake up our notions of sexuality and gender.

Buck tries to further obscure this notion of gender by saying that even though he considers himself a man, he would rather be labeled as a third gender that goes beyond the dichotomy of man and woman (qtd. in Doorne 58). He states that he lets potential sexual partners know up front about his transgender status asserting when he meets a woman:

> I'm honest; I've always been honest to me…I say, hey, before we get to the next step I just want to let you know that I'm a transsexual man. I used to be female. I had a sex change to a man. And I can tell you there hasn't been one time that I've ever had anybody turn me down after I was honest about it. It's pretty amazing. Men tend to be a little more concerned with that than women. Women have never said no to me. But actually some men have been a little freaked out by that. I think they're expecting to get a big cock and I have a pussy. Even though I can strap one on, though. No problem. It's kind of shocking to them. Women have never turned me down, though (qtd. in Ross par 18).

Finally, Buck is open and direct about his sexual orientation stating that he is bisexual (qtd. in Ross par 16). In this sense, we have a person who claims his status as transgender

as well as viewing sexuality and desire in ways that are contra SCIP. At the same time, he does not privilege heterosexuality or homosexuality thus allowing for fluidity and play within the realm of desire.

Overall, Buck's use of language seems to suggest that he is educated, direct, and open. He does not have problems discussing gender, sexuality, or sex for that matter. He also positions himself as someone who seems comfortable in his own skin and is not afraid to speak his mind. Politically, he is one voice for transgender individuals through his frankness about his identity and does not simply try to "pass" as a man as the SCIP approach would expect and suggest. Now, I turn to his use of commodities in creating his social style.

Use of Commodities[32]

Physically, Buck Angel has a burly, stocky physique. He often shows off his muscular chest and arms in various shots. He has a shaved head with a thick Fu Manchu and has one of his nipples pierced (Buck Angel.com, *Bizarre*, *Village Voice*, and *Eros Zine*). He has tattoos all over his body, such as on his arms, legs, chest, back of the neck, back, lower back, and most recently, his lower abdomen. For example, across his chest he has Chinese dragons while covering his arms down to his wrists he has a combination of tribal art and Celtic knots, anchors, writing, and an old-fashioned pin up girl (see BuckAngel.com and *Bizarre*). Across his upper back, he has the word "pervert" written in cursive and he has "Irish boy" across his lower back (See BuckAngel.com and *Bizarre*). One of his newest tattoos is of a winged stag emerging from a crown that he has on his lower abdomen (Buck Angel.com). He also has a tattoo of a dagger pointing down

[32] To describe the use of commodities, I also am including visual aspects of the body.

on the inner bottom portion of his right leg (Buck Angel.com). Therefore, he physically resembles what people would traditionally consider as the looks of a biker and/or construction worker due to his physique, muscles, and body art.

By using his body as a commodity[33], Buck draws upon social categories of gender and class to create his social style. His use of tattoos suggests that he claims his ethnicity as an "Irish boy" as another social category. Here we have three different social categories operating conjointly (class, gender, and ethnicity), yet they are unified in Buck's creation of social style and identity.

As far as dress is concerned, he often is shown with little or no clothing such as wearing a pair of jeans with no shirt (Buck Angel.com). When he does wear clothing often it is clothing that traditionally would be labeled as casual or those associated with the working-class such as jeans, T-shirts, cotton underwear, tank-tops, leather jackets, large sunglasses, and has little or no jewelry. In one photo shoot, he dons a cowboy hat, which traditionally suggests another form of working-class dress (Buck Angel.com and *Eros Zine*).

Usually, he is not shown with many material goods aside from one picture in front of a pickup truck and barn with him leaning against what looks like the seat of a motorcycle (Buck Angel.com). However, he also has been shown wearing black leather pants and gloves with a black T-shirt that has "police" written on it in capital, white letters while holding a baton (*Eros Zine*). In another photo, he wears army fatigues and black leather gloves with a riding crop (*Eros Zine*). Again, these instances of him with commodities are rare. Yet, if there is one commodity that consistently shows up in photos of Buck Angel, it is a cigar as he is either shown smoking or with a cigar in his mouth

[33] Some would argue that because Buck gets paid for his performances in adult videos, his body also is literally a commodity and it is because of his body that he earns a living. However, I argue that to some extent all of our bodies are commodities in this sense.

(*Eros Zine*, *Bizarre*, and Buck Angel.com). Finally, most of the backgrounds of the photographs are just plain curtains or walls (Buck Angel.com and *Bizarre*). However, in a couple of photos, he is shown outside in the woods and in front of a barn (*Eros Zine* and Buck Angel.com).

Therefore, Buck's use of commodities seems limited mainly to dress and the body. It is interesting to note that many of the forms of dress, and/or nudity itself, which Buck displays could be considered in light of creating sexual fantasies that involve authority, control, submission, and play. That is to say, in dressing like an army soldier, a cop, a cowboy, and/or by being naked Buck taps into sexual fantasies and the idea of role-playing in which some people are engaged.[34] Buck's nudity also could be seen politically as another attempt for him to "be out" about being transgendered. By embracing himself through a willingness to create and fulfill his desires and the desires of others, he opens up meanings surrounding sexuality and desire by claiming and displaying his body. Now, I want to discuss how Buck's use of commodities as well as the previous two dimensions, performance and language, also combine with the use of aesthetics to create his social style.

Aesthetics

Buck often wears dark colors such as black and dark blue and never wears light or bright colors. Combined with his performances, use of language, and commodities, this use of aesthetics seems to suggest a "working-class style" or a "biker look" that some would associate with masculinity. Especially when comparing the images of Buck Angel now to that of his former self "Susan," with her cropped blond hair and white scarf around her neck wearing a black leather jacket in one image or a photo of her in a white

[34] I will return to this point later when discussing the social, rhetorical, and political implications of Buck Angel as a text.

tank top with green khaki shorts, the contrast is striking (*Eros Zine* and *Bizarre* January 2005). That is not to say that Susan would be considered as "traditionally feminine," but Buck's use of aesthetics seems to be more geared toward having a hyper-masculine appeal. From the SCIP perspective, even though Susan is not "traditionally feminine," she would not be labeled a man whereas based on his looks Buck would not be labeled as a woman. Yet, Susan and Buck are one-and-the-same, which likewise plays with and troubles strict binaries even based on appearance. That is to say as Griggs argues, we attribute gender to a person based on looks and act from there, however, Buck causes these SCIP assumptions to fall apart (1).

Further, paralleling his performances, his aesthetic is homological and lacks any contrast. In other words, he does not wear dress pants with a cowboy hat or dark and pastel colors. This use of aesthetic also is repeated throughout various photos (i.e. dressed in black "cop" gear, dressed in army fatigues, and/or dressed in a cowboy hat and jeans).

Again, one could say that this use of aesthetics is directly related to the use of the erotic to create pleasure and/or desire for the audience that is steeped in hyper-masculinity. However, I believe we can more fully understand Buck Angel's creation of social style and identity if we view it through the lens of rhetorical homologies of personae. That is to say, Buck Angel in creating his social style and identity seems to be drawing upon the persona of a "biker outlaw" or "rebel."

WRANGLING IN A "BIKER OUTLAW" OR "REBEL": HOW BUCK ANGEL'S SOCIAL STYLE AND IDENTITY DRAW UPON A RHETORICAL HOMOLOGY OF PERSONA

In popular culture, the rebel or outlaw often is depicted as a person, or stock character, who is on the fringes of society such as a "biker," "criminal" and/or "lone rider" (e.g. the outlaw Josey Wales). He or she is a person who decides to go his or her own way or is an outcast in a particular group because of his or her views. If he or she

does belong to a group, then that entire group is usually a group of outsiders. In "Sleazy Riders: Exploitation, 'Otherness," and Transgression in the 1960s Biker Movie," Bill Osgerby explains that the "biker outlaw" became a facet of popular culture in the 1960s with the rise of films such as *The Wild Angels* (1966), *Devils' Angels* (1967), *Born Loser* (1967), *The Wild Rebels*, (1967), *Hell's Chosen Few* (1968), and a host of others (98). He declares that:

> In the 1960s biker genre, the anarchic excesses of the outlaw motorcycle gang were constructed as a spectacle that is, at once appalling and beguiling. On one level, the bestial depravity of outlaw bikers is presented as chilling evidence of a societal order in a state of collapse. But in other respects, the biker movies reveled in their anti-heroes' flouting of mainstream tastes and conventions. Ribald and bawdy, the biker film delighted in tweaking the tail of conformist sensibilities. With an appetite for all that was shocking, liminal, and 'unacceptable,' the 1960s biker filmed gloried in full throttle blood-and-thunder sensationalism—an emphasis on transgressive difference that effectively effaced the divide between commercial exploitation and avant-garde experiment (98-99).

It is this cultural persona that I believe Buck Angel draws upon in the creation of his social style, and, in turn, his identity. Specifically, Buck's social style closely resembles that of a biker outlaw through his use of dress, commodities, and aesthetics. His stance combined with facial expressions suggests power and danger. He also wears black leather and jeans, has tattoos all over, a muscular frame, and all around looks like he would be in a dive bar surrounded by his motorcycle gang.

As Osgerby indicates one of the most famous biker gangs, Hell's Angels, had: "A style of biker brotherhood that made [Marlon] Brando's leather-jacketed hoodlums [in *The Wild One* (1953)] look almost quaint by comparison, the Hell's Angels took the aesthetics of liminal dissent to new extremes—with long hair, Nazi motifs, greasy Levis, and customized motorcycles ("chopped hogs") whose low-slung frames, cattle-horn handlebars, and raked front forks were a symbolic expression of defiant non-conformity" (101). While Buck Angel's aesthetic is not extreme in this sense, (i.e. he does not wear

Nazi insignia or have long hair) he does seem to be tapping into this "motorcycle" aesthetic of leather, tattoos, muscles, and toughness which Osgerby suggests signify "…a fascination with polished chrome, black leather, and other markers of menacing machismo…" and is reflected in "…the brooding introspection of the bike gang leader" (99). Rhetorically, this use of a hyper-masculine persona calls attention to and disrupts the notion of masculinity itself because Buck Angel is transgender.

Buck Angel also resembles a rebel or biker outlaw through his use of language in that he speaks in a direct style and as one writer put it "he doesn't mince words" (Taormino par. 3). Typically a rebel is considered to be on the fringe of society because of his deeds, but mainly through what he says. In the classic film, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), one of the reasons that Jim, played by James Dean, gets into trouble is because of his words. Similarly, in other films and popular culture, the rebel or biker outlaw is a person who not only looks "tough," he or she talks "tough."

Buck Angel's use of language and speaking style certainly parallels this "tough" talk in the sense that he is straightforward and uses coarse and/ or vulgar language as a part of his everyday conversations like the kind that one would expect in a motorcycle gang. It again directly speaks to the social category of working-class, as most biker outlaws were not middle-class or rich instead having to live by the "code of the streets." Additionally, the subjects that he discusses may be considered by some to "push the envelope" or be taboo such as his frank discussions of sex, sexuality, and his sexual orientation. Again, Osgerby states that one of the characteristics that became synonymous with biker outlaws was "their gratuitous violation of social taboos" (99). So, in drawing upon a biker outlaw persona Buck violates taboos rhetorically through his use of "deviant" language.

Some also would consider Buck's behavior to be "deviant," which is another characteristic of a biker outlaw or rebel. While he is not a criminal, some would label his place or status in society as "deviant" behavior, not only because he is transgender, but also especially because he works in the adult entertainment industry as a porn star. He is a sexual rebel in some sense because he performs sex scenes with both men and women transgressing heterosexuality. He also participated in the first sex scene in porn history of a FTM with a MTF porn star, Allanah Star. In fact, his fan base is mostly gay men, thereby; as mentioned earlier he rebels against rigid definitions of sexuality and gender[35] (Greenfield par. 4).

In other words, some would consider his occupation a taboo or shocking paralleling representations of bikers in which they engage in taboos such as drunkenness, "mayhem," "wild parties," promiscuity, "sexual violence," and an "invasion of small-town America…"[36] (Osgerby 102). His performances in adult videos, in this sense, also parallel an outlaw because he exposes himself both literally and metaphorically to others by rebelling against the status quo. This rebelling could be viewed as a political rebellion counter to the status quo of society, its binary norms of labeling, transgressing this status quo, and contradicting the SCIP view.

Rather than creating his social style and drawing upon the cultural persona strictly based on masculinity, Buck disturbs and plays with this notion by claiming and putting forth his transgender status such that while he draws upon the biker outlaw, he redefines its meaning by encompassing a broader definition of masculinity beyond a strictly dual nature. In other words, he causes us to rethink the biker outlaw in terms of masculinity as well as masculinity itself. While some may argue that Buck Angel only demonstrates

[35] I will further explore this issue in the overall social, rhetorical, and political implications section.
[36] Again, I am not suggesting that Buck Angel engages in these kinds of behaviors (i.e. drunkenness, etc.) like the representations of bikers in films.

masculinity, this is not the case in the sense that he chooses to be out and up front about the fact that he has a vagina and seems to claim it as a point of pride even referring to it as a "male pussy" (qtd. in Doorne 62). I assert that this claiming of his "male pussy" disrupts the notions of gender and meanings of masculinity versus femininity, which may be one of the reasons that he is popular with his fans and criticized by others. Now, I want to briefly turn to audience responses to Buck Angel.

'A MIXED BAG': AUDIENCE RESPONSES TO BUCK ANGEL

As stated before, Buck Angel's main audience is mostly gay men, yet he is popular in other media venues. He was on *The Maury Povich Show* in April 2005 and on *Howard Stern* in February 2006. He also has been on the cover of *Bizarre* magazine three times—January 2005, July 2005, and most recently April 2006—with editor Alex Godfrey stating:

> Buck Angel, Buck Angel, Buck Angel. Enough with the Buck Angel already. Big deal, the man has a vagina. This is what, the third time in a year we've done a feature on him? Trouble is, the guy keeps breaking new ground. What can we do? You'd think being the only female-to-male transsexual in the adult entertainment industry would be enough, but no. Now he's gone and had sex with a male-to-female transsexual, which throws all sort of gender-bending mind-fucks into the ring. The great thing about Buck Angel—and the reason he's such an enduring *Bizarre* icon is that he makes us think. His mere existence confuses people. Reminds us there's more to life than man and woman, gay and straight… (4).

As the above quotation suggests, one reason that Buck Angel might be popular with fans is because he goes beyond the SCIP approach, drawing upon multiple social categories to create his identity, and allows for a rethinking of the binarist system of cultural norms by serving as a direct challenge to this way of thinking. Another reason for his popularity might be that politically he seems to offer a space outside of and/or an alternative to the dominant discourses of gender by disrupting, complicating, and playing with notions of gender and sexuality.

Buck declares that he has mostly received positive feedback from people on his Web site and through e-mails stating: "People in the Web world are very good, very generous. It's more customer-based…They are very supportive of my porn career!" (qtd. in AVN.com). He says that he receives letters from other FTMs stating: "A lot e-mail me and thank me for my work and what I am doing because it has opened them up to having sex with their partners…Wow! I actually changed someone's life. I am getting more and more e-mails saying I'm doing an amazing job" (qtd. in Doorne 61). While I will not cite all of the fan mail here, since he has four pages, I do want to provide a few samples of the responses on the site, Buck Angel.com. For example, one fan writes:

> Was surfing the web and came across your site. Totally Impressed!!! I'm FTM too, and your site confirms that we have bodies and sexualities that are worth knowing (intimately) and viewing. Would you email me back and let me know about your chest, what procedure did you get done, cause it looks F**ng great! I have been waiting years to get mine done up in Canada (the fuckin system up here sucks), but supposedly it will be done this year. If and when it happens, I would be able to be at a point where I would be buffing up and into some porn of my own! (Buck Angel.com)

Another fan states: "Just came acrossed you site and just had to tell you that I think it is great. I am a gay man and I find you a very hot man even with that great pussy of yours. I am very interested in one of your videos. Can you email me the info?" Finally, a third fan writes, "just a straight married female who finds you extremely sexy....t" (Buck Angel.com). As the e-mails attest, Buck seems to have a mixed audience of female-to-males, gay men, and straight women. Buck claims that he is popular with his fans because: "I know there's people like me who think guys like me are hot!" (qtd. in AVN.com). Therefore, another reason that he may be so popular with his fans is because for some transgender individuals he may serve as a role model meaning one representation or voice within society. In this sense, his fans also may feel that he

provides visibility in the political realm where historically transgender voices have been silenced by the SCIP view.

However, he underlines the fact that he has received some negative feedback which perhaps demonstrates a replication of the SCIP approach with negative responses to Buck because he cannot easily be categorized nor does he seem to want to be labeled in this manner. As John Sloop argues scholars have to consider which audiences cannot get beyond an essentialist, SCIP notion of gender and I argue that these criticisms could be categorized in this light ("Disciplining" 168). Buck reiterates this point explaining: "I get some bad e-mails from guys who say what I am doing is wrong and disrespectful" (qtd. in Doorne 61). Buck also discloses that some FTMs are not happy with him stating: "But I've also seen disapproval from them with postings about how disgusting what I'm doing is and I've received some hate mail from FTMs. On the whole, they don't tend to be my biggest buyers of memberships or videos, which is fine. Definitely a mixed bag [of audience responses]" (*Eros Zine* par. 35). Yet, I believe that one of the reasons he is popular, and perhaps unpopular with some, is because of the social, rhetorical, and political implications of Buck Angel as text.[37]

WHAT DOES BUCK ANGEL AS A TEXT SAY ABOUT IDENTITIES?: OVERALL SOCIAL, RHETORICAL, AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAN WITH A VAGINA

As mentioned earlier, Buck Angel complicates the notions of sex, gender, and sexuality by going beyond the binaries of essentialist single category identity politics or the SCIP approach. He was born a woman, but through surgery, drawing upon a cultural persona, and using social style to create his identity; he now lives as a man with a vagina. In contrast, a SCIP view of identity would require Buck to be labeled as either a "male" or "female" and as a result all of his behaviors would neatly fit into rigid definitions of

[37] Although I have pointed to instances of politics throughout this chapter, here I want to bring all of these issues together so it is possible to see the overall impact that they may have on society and culture.

"masculinity" and/or "femininity." In other words, according to a SCIP view, his vagina should dictate that he would be feminine which defined in the "traditional" sense would mean he would be soft-spoken, nurturing, and wear dresses.

Yet, Buck certainly cannot be labeled as traditionally feminine. However, as explained before, while drawing upon a "hyper-masculine" cultural persona of a biker outlaw he also disrupts traditional notions of masculinity in his social style. That is to say, following Sloop, a binaristic position of him defined as a male or female is steeped in heternormativity such that because he has a vagina and would be labeled as a woman, he would only be attracted to men ("A Van" 138). Buck also is contra-SCIP because he draws upon the multiple social categories of gender, sexual orientation, class, and ethnicity to create his social style and identity while SCIP would root his primary identity in one category or another.

Although Buck would label himself as a "manly man," he unsettles the notion of sexuality because he has sex with both men and women. A SCIP approach would label him as either "gay" or "straight," yet Buck claims bisexuality, which further complicates and plays with notions of sexuality and desire. In other words, would an SCIP approach consider him "straight" when he has sex with women, due to his appearance, and "gay" when he has sex with men even though he has a vagina?

Another problem that this raises is would an SCIP approach label his fan base, of mostly gay men, that are attracted to Buck—who looks manly but has a vagina—as "straight?" In other words, an SCIP approach might label gay men as straight because in watching Buck have sex with other men, his "equipment" would be labeled as belonging to a woman and he would be defined as such genetically because of his vagina. Yet, even though he has a vagina, this has not turned his gay audience away from him, which

disrupts and allows for fluidity in sexuality and desire as opposed to a rigid binary of "either/or" as the SCIP approach suggests.

This is not to say that Buck, or his audiences, for that matter is completely able to escape the system of binary norms or binaries of language that are rooted in our cultural discourses (Sloop, "A Van" 138). One could argue that he draws upon the cultural persona of a biker outlaw that some would label as "hyper-masculine" because there are not many alternative representations of masculinity and/or transgender. Therefore, I argue that what the case of Buck Angel points to is a "loosening" of a rigid binary system which also causes us to reexamine the meanings of these cultural terms (i.e. masculinity, femininity, etc.) and raises questions related to notions of sexuality and taboo (Sloop, "Disciplining 168).

Some would argue that Buck's appeal as a porn star is because he is "different" and therefore people are drawn to him because of his transgender status. While this may be a part of his appeal for some, I think it is remiss to label his fans' attraction to him just based on curiosity alone. It seems that a part of the appeal that Buck Angel has for fans comes from him tapping into the persona of being an outlaw or rebel (i.e. dangerous) and this may heighten the sense of interest in and desire for Buck Angel. In other words, he challenges notions of sexuality and taboos about sex through his transgender identity.

Rhetorically and politically, he causes us to further consider what Katrina Roen offered as the two camps of transgender arguments (i.e. "either/or" versus "both/neither") (502-505). Although Buck Angel is "manly," he does not simply "pass" as a man and instead claims his transgender status. Even though he refers to himself as a man he challenges this labeling by calling himself "a man with a pussy." This example also causes us to consider the complications involved with the politics of identity overall rather than seeing them as only black or white or from a SCIP stance. In other words, this

case causes a questioning of various categories of identity overall and the degree to which they can be based on notions that are *not* steeped in rigid binaries thus allowing for a multiplicity of meanings.

Politically from a SCIP perspective, Buck, living as a man, would only support those issues according to his status as a white male[38], which often is labeled as a privileged or dominant identity. Yet, his status as both transgender and bisexual might mean that his politics do not just reflect a "white male view,"(if such a view exists), as he certainly would be aware of discrimination due to sexuality and gender. Nevertheless, this status does not mean that he only supports "minority" issues as an SCIP approach would have us believe. In fact, while Buck considers himself a feminist at the same time he maintains that he objectifies both men and women (qtd. in Doorne 62). The notion of desire seems to disturb his feminist politics which causes a further questioning of the SCIP view that a person's identity as rooted in a single category dictates that person's politics.

Buck's identity as such causes us to reconsider the rigidity of binaries in language and binary norms that pervade our culture (Sloop, "Disciplining" 170). That is to say, he seems to provide strong evidence for the theory of polystylism in the sense that just because someone is labeled as something (i.e. check the box if you are gay or straight, male or female, etc.) does not mean that a person will support certain kinds of politics, live in a certain way, have a certain lifestyle, identify with particular groups, have one kind of sexuality, and/or have rigid desires. He further provides support for polystylism because he creates an identity that is polycategorical and unified, yet allows for a fluidity of meanings.

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[38] From my research, I was not able to find out much about his political affiliations or beliefs so to some extent this is conjecture on my part based on the research herein.

Social style coupled with rhetorical homologies of personae in the creation and maintenance of identity in this sense functions as a means for someone who was labeled as a "woman" based on genetics to physically, stylistically, and performatively "become" the man he has always wanted to be and at the same time allows him to claim his "pussy." Thus, I believe this example furthers scholar Judith Butler's argument that our genders, and here I add identities in general, largely are created through our performances of them and our various employments of the rhetoric of social style which often also draw upon cultural personae.

Buck Angel's identity construction has several rhetorical, political and social implications about identities in general. First, it answers the question of whether or not we can ever really escape cultural discourses that surrounds us as rhetorical scholar John Sloop posits. Although it seems that we are products of language (i.e. cultural discourses), we can disrupt, trouble, transform, transgress, and play with meanings of language such that it does not have to be steeped in rigidity. This identity creation directly challenges the SCIP view that our identities must be rooted in one category versus another as Buck Angel certainly does not do that and still has a unified identity.

His identity offers some answers about the degree to which our identities in general are both socially influenced and constrained because society itself dictates the various degrees of fluidity and control we have through the "forced reiteration of [cultural] norms" (Butler, *Bodies* 95). Hence, as Chris Humphrey's argues *in The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Medieval England*, transgression causes us to revisit the boundaries of cultural norms because "…the boundaries or standards that are being overstepped must be reasonably clear to the performers, and the audience…" yet, he also points out "such norms emerge *precisely because they are constantly performed and reiterated as such*…"(emphasis added 42).

Thus, as an example Buck Angel reminds us that these norms, as Judith Butler argues, have to be continually repeated and ritualized within society and culture. His rhetorical performance of social style to create identity, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to erode the rigidity of these norms. Again, while some may argue that he is an "extreme" example, I believe that he also demonstrates how our notions about various identities are opening up. In turn, he offers us an alternative view of identity construction by broadening the possibility for polystylistic identities spanning multiple social categories, subject to fluidity and play, yet continually receptive to reconsideration.

In the next chapter, I will continue to test polystylism by applying the theoretical and methodological framework to a more "mainstream" example. In contrast to the example of Buck Angel which some may label as an "extreme" or "alternative" view of identity creation, I will turn to the realm of the presidency to address social styles and rhetorical homologies of personae. Utilizing the examples two political dynasties, the Kennedys and the Bushes, I will move from a *macro* (rhetorical homologies of personae) to micro (social style) approach to explore how social style may be used to create identities that are based on applying a strategy of WASP-ing or De-WASPing for political gain.

Ch. 5: Masks of Privilege, Masks of Labor: WASPing and De-WASPing within Two American Political Dynasties

> "So while the Kennedys often tried to Waspify themselves and play the aristocrats, the Bushes migrated in the opposite direction. While the socially ambitious Kennedys were giving white-glove teas, the aristocratic Bushes were barbequing in Texas" Peter and Rochelle Schweizer—*The Bushes: Portrait of a Dynasty*

From George Washington to George W. Bush, politicians often have utilized impression management for political gain. Whether it be conducting whistle stop campaigns or kissing babies, they often engage in presentations of self that will make them the most popular with the public and thereby garner political support. Yet with the rise of mass media, this impression management has become crucial to how Americans view their politicians, forcing politicians themselves to become more focused on their images within the public realm. While this impression management usually occurs on an individual level, it also extends into the realm of political families or dynasties. As such, I propose that two of the most influential modern dynasties, the Kennedys and the Bushes, rely as much on the use of social styles as their respective wealth, power, and prestige to obtain their positions in American society.

Indeed, in these two cases I claim that this power and prestige directly stems from the use of social styles and rhetorical homologies of personae to move away from SCIP notions of their identities and, in turn, enhance their public and political clout. Specifically, I propose that in an attempt to have a more traditional identity in line with the politics of their time, the Irish-Catholic Kennedys created their identities through the strategic use of a WASP persona. On the other hand, the "blue-blooded" Bushes use a strategy of de-WASPing by employing a cowboy persona to make their identities more in line with "regular" Americans. Yet, each of these persona, the WASP and the cowboy,

ultimately are icons of the American dream across time and demonstrate the changing nature and fluidity of American politics.

In the last chapter utilizing a micro to macro approach, I provided the text Buck Angel as an "extreme" or alternative view of identity creation and maintenance. Here, moving from a *macro* to micro approach I offer two "mainstream" examples of how identity creation extends beyond SCIP in the realm of politics. Additionally, while there usually is the impression that SCIP largely is used by the marginalized, here I suggest that avoidance of SCIP also is a strategy that is used by the wealthy and/or the majority.

Therefore, I begin with an overview of why I believe politicians have become more aware of and use impression management by employing various cultural personae. Then, I will discuss what I label the WASP persona by providing a definition of WASP and outlining the characteristics of this rhetorical homology of persona. Next, I demonstrate how the Kennedy family's social style is created through the use of this WASP persona by pointing to several examples in their performances, use of language, use of commodities, and aesthetics.

In direct contrast to the Kennedys, I then explain how the Bushes use a strategy of De-WASPing to create their social styles and identities through the use of a cowboy persona by offering various examples as well. Finally, I discuss the implications of these two cases by outlining how the personae of WASP and cowboy seem to function in American society as cultural icons of the American dream, how other groups may employ this strategy of WASPing and De-WASPing in various social settings, and what these two rhetorical homologies of personae may demonstrate about the nature of politics today.

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT IN POLITICS: USING PERSONAE FOR POLITICAL ENDS

As stated earlier, politicians have always engaged in forms of impression management to garner public support and votes. Before the advent of television, they would travel from town to town giving public speeches to local constituents and adapt their messages according to these various audiences. For example, a politician could have two different messages for people in New Hampshire versus those in Virginia and no one would really know the difference. Although this campaign speech would be reported in newspapers, local papers usually covered local events or those issues that would be most important to that area. Therefore, it was common for politicians to craft specialized messages based upon the audiences to which they spoke.

However, with the rise of television, politicians had to become more aware of their presentations of self in public life because the same public appearances would be transmitted all across the United States such that people in New Hampshire and Virginia would view the same campaign speeches. Therefore, political messages had to become more generalized so that they would appeal to wider audiences across the country. Politicians also had to make sure that the same message that was given to one audience would match the overall message of other speeches less they appeared inconsistent. In other words, in the age of television it would be nearly impossible for a politician to give one speech that is anti-abortion and another that is pro-choice because she would appear to "flip-flop" on issues and risk losing both kinds of supporters. Yet, in addition to having consistent messages, television has forced politicians to become more focused on their presentations of self in public life.

As Roderick Hart argues in *Seducing America: How Television Charms the Modern Voter* it is no longer enough for politicians to address the issues, television has "changed politics itself" such that: "Televised politics it would seem is supported by an

army of seductions" in which politicians have to charm their constituents with their personalities as opposed to winning votes solely based on their performances of duties and/or their political stances (3-5). That is to say, Hart claims that television causes us to consider politics from an intimate perspective with personality politics as the rule and not the exception such that "although examining the private lives of politicians has long been fair game for the press, it now seems to be the *only* game" (emphasis added 41).

He also suggests that this rise in supposed political intimacy causes politicians themselves increasingly to succumb to displaying more aspects of their personalities in the public realm (Hart 25). He asserts that while candidates have continually "sought out countless media opportunities that featured their *informal* selves," this trend has carried over into the highest public office revealing: "During the last forty years, American presidents have increasingly placed themselves on center state whenever the occasion permitted. If the occasion did not permit it, they invented the occasion" (Hart 25).

Paralleling this point, several other scholars also attest to this increase in personality politics. Neal Gabler in *Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality* maintains: "…no entertainment form would theatricalize politics more powerfully than television. In politics, as in all things, television demanded action and it demanded personality" (99). He claims that today, the president not only has to lead the country he or she also has to be an "Entertainer-in-Chief" meaning that the highest level of office includes personality as a key factor for success in getting elected (Gabler 99-131). In "Presidential Rhetoric's Visual Turn," Keith Erikson also states: "As [Joshua] Meyrowitz notes, the presidency is frequently articulated in spectacle form because citizens accept the fact the chief executives *perform* the role of president rather than *be* president" (138). Each of these factors causes the public and politicians themselves to become more aware of and reliant upon a process of image-making in the political arena.

Therefore, I argue that because of the pervasiveness of media and the prevalence of personality politics, politicians increasingly rely on the use of rhetorical homologies of personae to create their public selves. That is to say, if now getting elected is based on personality, then it is highly likely that politicians would create their identities by drawing upon various cultural personae at their disposals because the American public also is familiar with these stock characters, types, or images. Further, I believe that politicians also try to utilize the persona that best appeals to the widest cross-section of the American voting public.[39] In turn, I assert that if individuals draw upon personae then certainly this employment also extends to political families as a whole. Now utilizing a *macro* approach, I turn to one such rhetorical homology of persona that has been drawn upon by a prominent political dynasty, that of the WASP.

FROM OLD MONEY TO RHETORICAL HOMOLOGY: THE WASP PERSONA

While scholars such as Peter Schrag and Nelson Aldrich, Jr. contend that WASPs no longer exist in American society, I suggest that "WASP" has become a rhetorical homology of persona that is managed in social style and lifestyle. Namely, I propose that our definition of WASP has gone beyond SCIP notions of referring to a particular racial or class identity and has moved into the realm of social style itself. Yet, before discussing how this rhetorical homology of persona operates as such, I begin by giving an overview of the term "WASP" as well as how it would be viewed from a SCIP perspective.

According to the book *Old Money: The Mythology of Wealth in America*, the term "WASP" was coined by E. Digby Baltzell to refer to people who are White, Anglo, Saxon, and Protestant (xvii). At first glance, it seems that the term "WASP" only relates

[39] As stated earlier in chapter four, I am not distinguishing between the public and private selves of politicians. I also am not arguing that the presentations of self that politicians display by drawing upon personae are not who they "really are." What I am asserting is that politicians utilize and/or highlight features of themselves that most fit into and/or strengthen these rhetorical homologies of personae they adopt.

to social categories of race or religion. However, the term simultaneously is connected with the upper class. In other words, traditionally WASP refers to *wealthy* White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants who also are considered the founders of this nation. As Peter Schrag argues in *The Decline of the WASP*: "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. A WASP. From cradle to grave, from literature to politics, from the meetings of the Rotarians to the reflections of statesmen, the WASP idiom permeated so much of everything that we hardly noticed it" (14). That is to say, because so much of America's past is connected to this group, it often operated invisibly as a form of privilege and status as he further claims: "How much of our identity [as Americans] is founded on the history of America as WASP…" (Schrag 19). In other words, the label WASP traditionally represents what many people used to consider the quintessential "American."[40]

Today, the use of the term is not very popular and many White Americans are resistant to its usage as a racial and ethnic label. In "Exploring Whiteness: A Study of Self Labels for White Americans," Martin et. al insist that currently White Americans generally prefer to be labeled as "White" or "Caucasian" as opposed to WASP and actually prefer the term WASP the *least* of all labels (emphasis added 139-140). Further, many scholars claim that although they used to be at the center of American culture and politics WASPs are in decline and some argue that they no longer exist (Schrag 15; Aldrich xvi-xxvii).

Peter Schrag claims that since the 1960s and the rise of counter-cultures, and challenges to the dominant political system by minority groups, WASPs have been replaced by these other groups who have moved into the forefront of prominent positions in American society[41] (66-70). Nelson Aldrich, Jr. parallels this argument stating: "…that

[40] Of course, this notion of being "quintessentially American" is subject to debate and has been challenged by many groups because WASPs certainly were not the first Americans.
[41] In the first chapter, I referred to SCIP as an outgrowth of various social movements in the 1960s.

whether they [WASPs] are caste or class, or have an ethnic or a class culture, is beside the point. The point is that no one looks up to them any more" (xix). In other words, these scholars believe that WASPs no longer occupy their once-held prominent places in American society or politics as they did in the past.

From an SCIP approach, the label WASP refers to a single category of class or racial identity with one of these labels being viewed as the primary identity. [42] Yet, arguing against SCIP notions, I assert that contrary to the popular belief that WASPs are in decline or rooted in a single social category that many believe is outdated, they have become a rhetorical homology of persona that is manifested in social style which also has several social, rhetorical, and political implications. In fact, I propose that WASP always has been a complex category, including race, religion, and class, which mainly relies on *style* for its social significance and prestige. In other words, WASP as a persona is mostly managed through the use of a social style that is associated with "Old Money." Although there are several complexities and nuances associated with WASPs as a group, here I will discuss the most prominent characteristics and signifiers of this rhetorical homology of persona, which include the following: 1) class, 2) race, and 3) social style and lifestyle that are all permeated by an overriding appeal to tradition.

Class

The WASP persona first and foremost signifies the upper echelons of society, the "blue-bloods" of "Old Money" that can trace their family histories back to the very foundations of American society. It, therefore, is directly rooted within the traditional

[42] Although WASP also contains the social category of *religion*, (i.e. Protestant), I believe that for these two examples, religion plays a less important role. Therefore, I mainly will focus on the two dominant aspects of race and class in this chapter. However, I will mention religion later in this chapter specifically when analyzing the social styles of the Kennedys and Bushes in so far as it plays a role within the overall political strategies of both families.

with older being more highly valued as Nelson Aldrich, Jr. asserts in *Old Money: The Mythology of Wealth in America*:

> Time or wealth, 'oldness' or richness of family—the question frequently comes up in Old Money circles as to which of these elements in people's perceptions of the class is more important… Time, even Old Money time, can be money... There is a very good reason for time to be, so to speak, pictorially dominant in the composition of Old Money. Time has always had to carry a large part of the rhetorical burden of justifying the key institution that makes Old Money possible—the inheritance of wealth (31).

In fact, these inheritances, which extend over many generations, are key hallmarks of class status as Aldrich further discloses: "Inherited wealth is an especially egregious, because wholly unearned, source of inequality. Even in its purest, most abstract condition, where it does nothing for its inheritor but make him or her more money, wealth confers a certain superiority. At the very least, it confers an invidious distinction" (31). In this sense, the image of being a WASP means that a person has material privileges that derive from having economic clout. That is to say, he or she reaps the benefits that come from being wealthy. In turn this material wealth also spills over into the political and social arenas because people who have money also are able to wield influence in society by voting with their money.

As a result aside from having inheritances that span generations, the WASP persona also traditionally signifies philanthropists and investors who donate or invest money into several governmental, educational, not-for-profits, and arts and cultural institutions. Therefore, one attribute of this image is that they often serve as authority figures and the dictators of "high" culture. Again, we see how politically and socially the image of WASPs is directly tied to using money as a form of influence in a host of areas because they are viewed as giving money or serving on the boards of directors for major

institutions which can determine how that money is spent as well as the kinds of social and political endeavors they will support.

At the same time that they are seen as donating money to various causes, the WASP persona signifies that class status is used to exclude other groups, as Nelson Aldrich believes:

> Old Money exercised guardianship over the distinctive tastes, fashions, and manners of its members in Society…Through its schools, colleges, and universities, its museums, orchestras, and operas, the class could believe itself the chief sponsor and custodian of high culture. In the House of Morgan and hundreds of smaller banks in every city, it build patrician towers from which it could direct the investment of the nations savings—a sizable part of them its own. Those primary institution were also in place—Old Families and trust funds of Old Family money—by which the class might be maintained in perpetuity: reproducing itself, so to speak, by birth, adoption, and training, and supporting itself by generous and judiciously timed infusions of cash (36-37).

In other words, the image of Old Money is viewed as having political, social, and rhetorical influence because WASPs have the money and connections to shape various organizations as well as the ability to exclude other people who do not fit into this class category. Yet, this exclusion of others also extends into the social category of race to which I now turn.

Race

As stated before, the racial and ethnic categories that comprise the WASP image also play a significant role in its social, rhetorical, and political influence in American culture. WASP therefore signifies not only the upper class, but also a particular category of *whiteness*. As John Hartigan, Jr. points out in "Establishing the Fact of Whiteness": "Studies of whiteness are demonstrating that whites benefit from a host of apparently neutral social arrangements and institutional operations, all of which seem—to whites at

least—to have no racial basis" (496). He further asserts that whiteness carries with it levels of privilege and here I want to go even further to suggest that the highest level of whiteness and privilege associated with this racial and ethnic category that is directly intertwined with the image of being rich is to be *Anglo-Saxon and Protestant*.[43]

In other words, just because a person is socially-categorized as White does not automatically make him or her WASP because the image of WASP traditionally excludes other racial or ethnic categories associated with immigrants who migrated to the United States such as the Irish or Italians. As Peter Schrag reveals, while many immigrants tried to assimilate and become WASPs they were still excluded (34, 55). Again, the social, rhetorical, and political implications are that whiteness as a category carries with it levels of prestige, power, and economic benefits that often are invisible. However, privilege, prestige, and power were greater for whites that were viewed as WASPs and not new immigrants to the United States. Yet, I want to recommend that aside from these intertwining social categories, WASP is a *style* as Schrag further argues: "The WASP style extended to almost everything: to the way people spoke, how they thought, what they believe in and what they should look like…"(22). [44] Now I turn to WASP social style and lifestyle.

Social Style and Lifestyle

One of the first areas comprising the image of WASP social style and lifestyle is education which is viewed as a highly valued commodity that has a great deal of political power. It is expected that a WASP will not only attend a higher educational institution,

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[43] The racial/ethnic label of Anglo-Saxon implies a northern European or British heritage while the label Protestant is directly connected to the Church of England. Therefore, this labeling reiterates the connection to the "Old World" of Britain.

[44] Granted if a person is not wealthy or White it is harder, if not impossible to completely WASP, but one can take on this rhetorical homology of persona through the embodiment of social style and lifestyle.

but also that his or her primary school education will be at a prestigious private school. Sometimes even before a child is born, his or her educational career is mapped out already from primary school through graduate school. Most WASP children attend private elite institutions such as Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut and Phillips Academy at Andover in Andover, Massachusetts. As a result of receiving their primary educations at prestigious schools, which focus on college preparatory, WASPs often are groomed for higher education, but also are being prepared for their future positions in family businesses and other institutions. That is to say, the image of a WASP's primary education is that it carries with it both "cultural capital" as Pierre Bordieu suggests, but also readies one for higher education (*Distinctions* 12).

For higher education, WASPs are viewed as usually attending Ivy League institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. More often than not, the issue of legacy also plays a large role in determining where someone will attend school in the sense that an entire family may traditionally attend a certain private school and college. For example, a person's father will attend Choate and Harvard and the son or daughter will follow in the father's footsteps. The education of WASPs usually extends beyond a Bachelor's degree and into a Master's in an area such as law, business, or medicine.

As far as education, the image of WASP signifies that a person will not only be formally educated in various subjects at school and college, he also is expected to have a broad knowledge of the arts (music, fine arts, etc.), literature, and above all else etiquette. In other words, the image of WASP signifies high standards of etiquette in which a person is immersed from childhood. As stated earlier, following Bordieu's work we could look at images of WASPs' formal and informal educations as providing them with a particular "habitus" such that they can readily identify each other based upon whether or not a person knows proper etiquette in situations, about particular cultural artifacts such

as art or Classical music, and/or whether or not he or she knows the proper place settings.[45] As Nelson Aldrich, Jr. asserts:

> It's as though the lift of hereditary wealth carries its beneficiaries to a plane of consciousness where everything below, their own conduct as well as everyone else's, seems a matter of form….In nurseries, at St. Midas schools, at rhetorical and actual Harvard, at country clubs and gentlemen's and ladies' clubs, even face to face with one's father or mother—whenever an attempt is made to inculcate the graces and the virtues…It's the figure we cut in public, actions asking for aesthetic judgment (90-91).

Each of these kinds of education adds to creating a WASP persona as the ability to exclude others based on social style, but also these educations help politically in a number of ways. They enable a person to act according to standards set before him so that he can form alliances with others. Further this level of education, especially higher education, means that WASPs will be able to obtain better occupations.

In turn, another area of social style and lifestyle that signifies WASP is that of occupations. As stated earlier, the image is that many WASPs inherit their money so they do not have to work which frees them to pursue other social, economic, and/or political endeavors. However, if they do have an occupation, more often than not it will be a traditional, white-collar job such as a doctor, lawyer, banker, or holding public office. If a WASP has a corporate position, it is expected that she or one of her family members usually will own the company and/or will hold an upper-management position such as a vice-president or be a member of the board of directors. In addition to their jobs, the representation of WASPs is that they may be on the boards of several major corporations and/or own stock in those companies. Again, having these kinds of occupations reinforce their images of having socio-economic and political clout as Nelson Aldrich argues:

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[45] I am not saying that these forms of etiquette and education only apply to WASPs. However, they are key signifiers of WASP style. As a social style and lifestyle, these aspects also are drawn upon by other groups to signify WASP as I will demonstrate later in this chapter.

> And the best personage through whom to view it [patrimony] is that famous figure of Old Money probity the 'Boston trustee.' He is a composite figure, as I see him: part individual—the lawyer or banker who looks after your trust; part institution—the bank or firm that actually manages the money. Very often he is in capitalistic succession to the family founder: if not a descendant of the man himself, then a descendant of one of his close friends and business associates… (60).

As far as commodities are concerned, often the image of WASP is that a person's possessions will extend back over several generations such as estates, land, even household items such as fine silver, and china will have been handed down over the years. The WASP image is that they also purchase "big-ticket" items that have value, such as homes, instead of those that will easily be wasted. As such, WASPs usually are not viewed as engaging in conspicuous consumption by buying into fads and lean more towards the traditional such as classic clothing, minimal jewelry, and antiques (Fussell, *Class* 52-71).

One of the most common possessions indicating WASP social style and lifestyle is that of the estate which usually is inherited. These private estates are huge houses with several acres of land and often seem like a small community. To run these estates, the WASP image suggests the employment of several people such as a nanny, butler, maid, gardener, etc. and these activities are usually overseen by the women of the household. Again, the image of WASP homes is that they are largely classically decorated (such as dark wood furniture) and sometimes with original furnishings dating back to the family's "founding father." By purchasing items of value or inheriting them, WASPs are viewed as maintaining their wealth and, in turn, their power and privilege.

Not only does the representation of WASP suggest ownership of estates, these estates usually are viewed as located in certain parts of the country as Paul Fussell contends that geographic location often is an indicator of class status and privilege (*Class* 36-37). Traditionally, the image of WASP signifies locations in the Northeastern United

States in places of prestige such as Boston, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, and New York City's Upper East Side. Again, as Nelson Aldrich, Jr. declares in *Old Money: The Mythology of Wealth in America* there tends to be a leaning toward the old and traditional as more valued revealing:

> It is no coincidence that that the two American cities most widely known for their hereditary upper classes, Boston and Philadelphia, are the two most notorious for their hostility to fashion [and novelty]….Patricians of those old towns never go anywhere unless they've 'always' gone there, never know anyone unless they've 'always' known them…Sometimes, indeed it seems as though anything they do not inherit they do without, buying only the very plain food on their plates (77).

For the WASP persona, location also signifies a means of power in the sense that these places also are usually centers of business. Further, if located in these areas it is more likely that a person will be able to make connections on a personal, professional, and political level.

Similarly this prestige of location ties into vacation spots with the image of WASP locations also around areas such as Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and The Hamptons. Here, social style and lifestyle directly relate to class status in the sense that one has to be able to afford to vacation in these areas and these areas also are very exclusive. They, too, are places where people are able to make important social and professional connections. Yet aside from vacationing, the image of WASP is that they also travel to other countries with Europe being a popular destination because it is viewed as the height of "Old World" classical culture.

WASPs also are viewed as engaging in several leisure and social activities like sports, such as tennis, polo, yachting, swimming which require either free time and/or a large amount of money for participation. The image of WASP is that they host a number of social events such as luncheons, teas, and dinner parties that often are an extension of various exclusive country clubs and organizations to which they belong as a signifier of

elitism. Some of these social organizations are ones that began at private school; however, some also belong to secret societies at college (i.e. Skull and Bones Society) where they are supposed to make friends and business associates that last a lifetime which carry their own degree of social and political benefits. Again, the image of these clubs and associations is that they usually are older establishments, highly exclusive, and membership often is based upon legacy. Yet another aspect of the WASP image that is seen as handed down through the generations is that of performances.

The image of WASP performance is that it is based upon formality and impeccable manners concerning all areas of clothing, speech, and use of language. Generally, WASPs are viewed as having upright posture and a confident stance. Their use of speech and language is also seen as very formal such as referring to their parents as "Mother and Father" instead of "Mom and Dad." Each area of performance related to the image of WASP is directly linked to a sense of grace steeped in the traditional and is highly-formalized. As Nelson Aldrich, Jr. suggests in *Old Money: The Mythology of Wealth in America*:

> After their settings, the classiest acts by which the Old Rich reveal themselves are matters of an attractive personal presence: postures, demeanor, gestures, speech, manners, and other clues of personality and character that tell those of us who are interested in putting people in the places where, socially speaking, they belong…Whenever Old Money's characteristic presence is described, the critical vocabulary returns again and again to the same family of words—casual, careless, nonchalant, insouciant, easy, unstudied, natural, effortless…Basically, all that Old Money can do to refine this common courtesy is to endow it with the appearance of art…Courtesies are movements, dispositions of the body as well as (sometimes) of the mind and spirit. They are required to get oneself in and out of a room properly, to introduce oneself (shaking hands, looking the other in the eye) and to introduce others, to greet people, to make them feel comfortable in one's company, and to send them on their way. What gives these movements the aura of delight is that they are designed to please, perhaps even to delight (83-85).

Again these manners and behaviors connected to the WASP image are seen as benefits in being able to relate to others, helping to "win friends and influence people," and are a social and political asset because a person knows how to act in business and social worlds which often are modeled on WASP behaviors.

Finally, as stated earlier the WASP social style and lifestyle privilege a classical or more traditional aesthetic that harkens back to an older English style. In fact, one could argue that the image that Old Money tries to present attempts to imitate the aesthetics that are commonly associated with the "Old World" European standards of taste and beauty. As Paul Fussell points out in *Class*, the upper class image is that it has sensibilities rooted in the archaic stating that this privileging of the old is: "Thus one reason Britain and Europe still, to Americans, have class. Thus one reason why inheritance and 'old money' are such important class principles" (71-72). This classicism also is rooted in privileging "high" culture over "low" culture.

From an SCIP perspective, it would seem impossible for anyone to become a WASP if he or she is not born as such and as I alluded to earlier many insist that WASPs as a group no longer exist. However, I believe that WASP mainly has been managed in style and it is a style that has been mimicked by other groups such that it has now become a rhetorical homology of persona. As Peter Schrag claims, the WASP style spread throughout the United States and many people began to adopt this style as a means of social mobility because "ultimately the WASP ethic [and style] was itself commercialized… it was packaged" (34). One of the primary ways that this social style and lifestyle became packaged and sold, and I add transformed into a rhetorical homology of persona, was through the mass media as Schrag further claims: "Hollywood remade the WASP image. Hollywood did not merely package the American dream…it

also perpetuated and resurrected—indeed turned into flesh—the WASP hero and the WASP ideal" (38).

For example within popular media there are several WASP representations such as Ty Wells and Judge Elihu Smails in *Caddyshack* (1980), Louis Winthorpe III and the Duke brothers in *Trading Places* (1983), and even in the hit television show *Seinfeld* (1990-1998) when the character George Costanza meets his new fiancé's parents, The Rosses (Internet Movie Database). In fact, one of the quintessential representations of striving to WASP found in literature and film is F. Scott Fitzgerald's character Jay Gatsby, in *The Great Gatsby*, where his ultimate goal is to become a WASP and therefore become "good enough" for Daisy, the love of his life.

Aldrich also argues that the commodities and style of Old Money have become commonplace and can be seen in fashion such as Ralph Lauren's Polo line stating: "The relics purveyed at Polo HQ can be purchased by anyone who wants to buy them, but they used to belong, more or less exclusively to an elite of inherited wealth called the American upper class" because WASP culture and style "…after a long illness died—whereupon it was transfigured as lifestyle commodity, elements of which you'll find on sale at your nearest Ralph Lauren outlet" (xvii).

Therefore, I claim that WASP itself has become a rhetorical homology of persona that is manifested in social style through lifestyle, choice of commodities, performances, use of language, and aesthetics. I believe that it has moved beyond a strict SCIP definition, as primarily a class or racial identity, and instead this rhetorical homology of persona can be drawn upon by various groups and individuals. Yet, aside from the WASP persona being drawn upon by "regular" Americans, this persona also was used by one of the most influential political families, the Kennedys, and I assert this persona is one of

the main reasons for their ascent to becoming a political powerhouse dynasty. Now, I will turn to some brief biographical information about the Kennedy family.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE KENNEDY FAMILY[46]

Born on September 6, 1886, Joseph P. Kennedy was a third generation Irish-Catholic who I argue began the process of WASPing for the Kennedy family in earnest.[47] (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum; Hamilton 7) His father, Patrick J. Kennedy was a second-generation Irish immigrant who worked his way up from poverty to become a Boston politician (Hamilton 7). According to Nigel Hamilton's work *JFK: Reckless Youth*:

> His [grand]father, also a penniless Irish immigrant, had died of cholera in Boston the year [his father]Pat was born…Pat had left school at fourteen to become a stevedore at the docks, but after serving in several harbor taverns, he'd decided at age twenty-two to buy his own. By twenty-six he had two drinking parlors and was inevitably drawn into the Boston-Irish political arena winning election five times to the Massachusetts House of Representatives (7).

Married to Mary Hickey in 1887 and having Joseph Kennedy in 1888, Patrick Kennedy made sure that his son obtained an education and Joseph attended Harvard University. Yet although he had the educational credentials, Joseph Kennedy was not accepted by Boston Society because they viewed him as Irish-Catholic from a SCIP view as Nigel Hamilton in *JFK: Reckless Youth* upholds:

> Getting ahead in Brahmin New England however was not so easy for an ambitious Irish Catholic, even with a Harvard degree. The sign NO IRISH NEED APPLY had typified the prejudice of old Yankee families and still did. Though Joe had been permitted to go to Harvard, socially he'd been snubbed there. To his chagrin he was blackballed by all the 'final' clubs at Harvard—membership in which would have guaranteed subsequent acceptance by elite Boston society and a job in one of the great brokerage firms of the city (Hamilton 18).

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[46] In discussing both the Kennedys and Bushes, I am still following my earlier argument that you can only create a verisimilar image of people as I did with text Buck Angel.

[47] Although Patrick Kennedy provided his son with a Harvard education which some would argue would be the beginnings of WASPing, the Kennedys did not "arrive" until John F. Kennedy.

Although he had not been accepted by Brahmin (i.e. Old Money) society, Joseph Kennedy became a wealthy entrepreneur through the stock market, the movie industry, and became the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission as well as entering the realm of politics where he was an Ambassador to England (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum).

On October 7, 1914 he married Rose Fitzgerald who was the daughter of Boston mayor John "Honey" Fitzgerald and they had nine children Joseph Jr., John, Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice, Patricia, Robert, Jean, and Edward (Hamilton 22-23 and John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum). Although they were wealthy, the Kennedy family was socially excluded by their Boston Brahmin neighbors as Augustus Sole, who grew up with the Kennedy children, states:

> Almost everybody [else] was a Protestant…I think there was a sort of snobbery, which the children adopted. I think that in those days the upper crust Boston families, of which there were a great number sending their children to school, were very down on the Irish…To be a Irish Catholic was a real, real stigma—and when the other boys got mad at the Kennedys, they would resort to calling them Irish or Catholic (quoted in Hamilton 54).

Again, the Kennedy family is labeled according to SCIP wherein their primary identities are rooted in being Irish which is viewed by their Brahmin neighbors in direct opposition to their own Old Money identities. Further, because of this SCIP perspective it is expected that the Kennedys would always be viewed as Irish-Catholic by their neighbors and discriminated against because of this social category, and seen as belonging to the lowest echelons of society as a result. Therefore, it seems impossible that the Irish-Catholic Kennedys would ever become accepted by their WASP neighbors.

However, through the use of social style and drawing upon the rhetorical homology of a WASP persona, the Kennedys that once were excluded from the elite

Boston Brahmin society slowly but surely would prevail with John F. Kennedy becoming the "quintessential" embodiment of WASP.

CREATING CAMELOT: THE KENNEDY SOCIAL STYLE AS A STRATEGY OF WASPING

Once excluded from prominent social circles, the Kennedys were able to move beyond SCIP notions of identity to employ a WASP persona that would take them to the heights of political power and seal their fates in American society. I propose that, for political reasons, the Kennedys employ the strategy of WASPing to make their identities more traditionally in-line with the politics of the time during the early 19th and 20th centuries when WASPs were still privileged over immigrants like the Irish. I assert that to mask other complications of identity such as the fact that they were both Irish-Catholic immigrants and nouveau riche the Kennedys took on a WASP persona. This process of WASPing, which was begun by Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., continues to this day where the Kennedy family finally is accepted as "Old Money."

However, I also suggest through this example, and the example of the Bushes later, that the Kennedys' employment of WASPing as a strategy also relies on a fluidity of identity because they did not simply exchange one identity for another. In other words, the Kennedys retain the ability to return to their original identities or strategically move back and forth between being Irish-Catholic and WASP through the uses of social style and persona. Now I want to turn to a *micro* approach of outlining the components of their social styles to demonstrate how the Kennedys'[48] social styles create WASP personae by providing various examples throughout this section from both written texts and visual

[48] For purposes of chapter, I will mainly discuss the social styles of Joseph Kennedy, Sr. and John F. Kennedy, who I will also refer to as "Jack" as compared to George Herbert Walker Bush (George H.W.), and George W. Bush, (George W.). Here, I note that the comparisons between Jack Kennedy and George W. may have some disparities because they are from two different generations as well as the fact that Jack Kennedy was not the first-born son like George W.

images.[49] Remember, the four areas that comprise *social style* are performance, use of language, commodities, and aesthetics so I will begin by discussing the first area of social style, performance.

Performance

The first area of performance the Kennedys utilize to create a WASP persona is that of education.[50] Aside from his own Harvard education, Joe Kennedy, Sr. made sure that his children attended elite private schools. As Nigel Hamilton argues: "Though not a fan of things British, Joseph Kennedy was anxious to see his children excel in life and to help them break out of the social confinement in which, despite his sudden wealth, he felt snared" (81). As such, Joe Jr. attended Choate and John attended the Canterbury School and then followed his older brother to Choate as well (Hamilton 84-88). Other children in the family attended small private schools as well such as Maplehurst Sacred Heart Convent School (Patricia), Riverdale Country School (Kathleen), and the Convent of the Sacred Heart School in Noroton, Connecticut (Eunice) (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum).

By sending his children to private schools, Joe Kennedy was trying to ensure that they would be exposed to and provided with the personal and professional connections that would benefit them later in life in WASP circles. This focus on a prestigious educational background also extends into higher education with both Joe Jr. and Jack attending the London School of Economics and Harvard University (Hamilton 109, 139-

[49] Due to the sheer volume of images and biographies on the Kennedy family it was not possible to look at every biography and/or image in scholarship and the popular press. As stated in chapter four, I also, want to point out that with both Kennedys and Bushes the texts and the images are "selections of reality" based upon my selections. Some scholars would argue that many of the photographs for both political families are staged and especially the ones for political campaigns and/ or in the White House. While this argument is true, the images still show us the political identities they are trying to create for the public and personae they try to evoke.

[50] As stated earlier in this chapter, some also may consider education a commodity.

142, 164). Edward, "Ted," and Robert both attended Harvard and the University of Virginia for higher degrees and Eunice attended Stanford University (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum) Again, politically these educational backgrounds provide them with both the connections and the credentials to blend into WASP society.

At these elite private school and colleges, both Joe Jr. and Jack participated in various clubs and activities. For example, according to Leo Damore in *The Cape Cod Years of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*: "The summer of 1933 had begun propitiously for Joe, Jr. He received the Harvard Trophy as the Choate student who best combined scholarship with good sportsmanship and entered Harvard in the fall" (36). While at Harvard University Joe, Jr. was a member of Pi Eta, Hasty Pudding, on the football and soccer teams, was a member of student council, worked on the yearbook staff, and had extremely high grades graduating with honors (Damore 49).

On the other hand, Jack was a cheerleader at Choate and at Harvard became a member of the exclusive Spee Club (Damore 36; Hamilton 205-208). According to Nigel Hamilton: "Although elected to the Hasty Pudding Institute, Harvard's drama club which acted as a stepping stone to the final clubs, neither Joseph Kennedy nor Joe Jr…were ever invited to join one of the final clubs at Harvard" (205). By becoming a member of the Spee Club, Jack Kennedy had achieved something that his father and brother could not as Hamilton further explains by becoming a member: "Jack had made it: the first Kennedy to ever break into the inner sanctum of Boston's WASP world…It was a status symbol for him…that at last the Kennedys were good enough" (208-209). Here, we can see how the process of WASPing occurs. While Joe Kennedy Sr. was not accepted in prestigious WASP clubs, his first-born son Joe, Jr. was accepted by some of them. Yet, his second-born son, Jack, demonstrates that it was not until the third Kennedy at Harvard that they were perhaps finally becoming accepted as WASPs.

The next area of performance in which the Kennedys move beyond SCIP notions of their Irish-Catholic identity is that of occupation. While his father was a second-generation immigrant Joseph Kennedy, Sr. became a wealthy entrepreneur, the SEC Commissioner, and an Ambassador to England (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum). He also helped his son, Jack to pursue a career in politics that led all the way to the White House. In other words, Joseph Kennedy Sr. made sure that his children, not only had WASP educations, but did not have to have traditional working-class jobs that were often the ones held by immigrants. In fact, Jack, like other WASP children, did not have to work because he received an inheritance as Leo Damore reveals: "In May 1938 Jack became a millionaire; his coming of age [i.e. turning 21] brought to him the initial benefits of a trust fund established for him by his father in 1929" (50). Therefore, instead of holding jobs, the Kennedy children could pursue other white collar occupations such as becoming lawyers and politicians as well as have the financial backing necessary to pursue any endeavors they chose.

Another way that the Kennedy's used performance to WASP was through their various leisure activities. First, aside from being an Ambassador to England, Joseph Kennedy, Sr. made sure that his children traveled abroad. For example, Joe Jr. and Jack both went on European tours and attended the London School of Economics (Hamilton 141). In 1937, Jack and a friend also traveled throughout Europe to England, France, Italy and Germany (Hamilton 178-199). Aside from traveling abroad, the Kennedys also vacationed in exclusive places such as Palm Beach and Cape Cod[51] as well as living for a time in both Boston and New York City (Hamilton 59). Therefore, the Kennedys' travel can be labeled as WASP not only because they lived in these exclusive places, which

[51] I will further discuss this under commodities.

were the centers of WASPdom, but also because they had the money and leisure to travel as well as owning more than one residency.

Another area of leisure activities related to performance is sports and perhaps more than any other activity the Kennedys are shown sailing and yachting. As Leo Damore reveals in *The Cape Cod Years of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, the Kennedys often competed in sailing races on the Cape with: "The first of what would be a series of Kennedy sailboats appeared in1927 and was promptly christened by Joe, Jr., and Jack Rose Elizabeth for their mother. The two brothers bent every effort to master the vessel, to learn to sail it properly and, above all, to win races—a preoccupation that was to dominate many of their summers at Hyannis Port [CT]" (25). In fact, many images of Jack and the Kennedy family as a whole capture them sailing.

For example, in a series of pictures in *The Cape Cod Years of John Fitzgerald Kennedy*, Jack first is shown helping his younger brother Edward, "Ted" Kennedy launch a boat, another shows him on a boat after his race for the Senate, and finally he and his future wife, Jacqueline are shown "on a sailfish" shortly after becoming engaged (in Damore after 188). When he was in the White House, Jack would return to Cape Cod to sail as a picture from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum Web site shows him aboard the *Honey Fitz* which was named for his grandfather. In another picture from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum Web site he and his wife Jackie are shown in 1962 watching the America's Cup Race from their own yacht. Again, these activities most often are associated with WASPs.

In addition to sailing, the Kennedys also engaged in swimming, golfing, and played football. For example, Joe Kennedy Sr. played golf at an exclusive club on Cape Cod while all of the Kennedy children swam during their summers there as well. (Damore 38). Both Joe Jr. and Jack played football at Harvard (Hamilton 21). A *Life*

Magazine photograph shows Jack Kennedy (dressed in a shirt, dress pants, and a tie) throwing a football to his younger brother Robert (who is wearing a polo shirt and khakis) on the lawn in front of one of their houses (Life.com).

Even in the area of marriage, Jack chose a partner that would further the Kennedys ability to WASP.[52] On September 12, 1953, he married Jacqueline Bouvier[53] who was of French descent. Although she also was a Catholic, she came from a wealthy family and attended boarding school in Connecticut. For her higher education, Jackie attended Vassar College and traveled abroad to Paris. In addition, she was as an equestrian which is another traditionally WASP activity (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum).

Above all else, Jackie's own style[54], glamour, and grace would complement Jack's and the Kennedy family's strategy of WASPing as David Burner and Thomas West in *The Torch is Passe*d: *The Kennedy Brothers and American Liberalism* assert that the "looks, graces, and lineage of the wife [Jackie] went with much of what the Kennedys had been cultivating" (53). In this sense, one of the ways that the Jack Kennedy continued to WASP was by marrying "the right kind of person" (i.e. one of equal social status and class) as opposed to marrying beneath his class status or marrying someone who also was Irish which may also may have been viewed as "marrying down" by his social circles even though he was Irish himself.

The area of performance that most directly relates to WASPing is that of behaviors and manners such as posture and social graces and this strategy is also one of the key ways that the Kennedys moved beyond SCIP. This social upbringing is most often associated with the influence of the matriarch of the family, Rose Kennedy, as

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[52] I am not arguing that this is the sole reason for the marriage and/or that this was done consciously.
[53] I also will refer to Jacqueline as Jackie.
[54] I will discuss this further under aesthetics.

Nigel Hamilton suggests because she wanted her children to fit in socially when they first moved to Boston: "Rose now relentlessly modeled herself and her children on the image of a *Ladies Home Journal* family" (51). He further proposes she continually educated her children on matters of appearance and etiquette which bordered on "…becoming an obsessive desire to drill her children for a social world that would not accept her…" but she would nevertheless make sure that through their training in WASP social graces they would be accepted (115).

Specifically, Jack became known as being the embodiment of WASP style in his manners, gestures, and posture and often was considered the perfect gentleman. He had good posture, strong facial expressions, and a youthful look which is one of the reasons that he defeated Richard Nixon in the 1960s presidential race. According to Richard Reeves' work *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* there was a good reason that Kennedy won the election:

> Something else worked for [Jack] Kennedy, something new: the growing penetration of television into the life of the nation…In a Chicago studio, Kennedy and Nixon debated on September 26, 1960, Whatever the words spoken that night, Kennedy seemed cooler, healthier, and wittier than Nixon. He *looked* as presidential as the man who had been Vice President for the past eight years (17).

Further, as the first president of television, Jack Kennedy and his wife were highly photogenic and in fact it is perhaps in the area of political performances that we can most see the Kennedys use as a strategy of WASPing.

Although Joe, Sr. was a businessman, he became the SEC commissioner under President Roosevelt and then an Ambassador to London (Hamilton 109). Under his tutelage, Jack became a Congressman, Senator, and then President of the United States so many of the aspects of performance and WASPing are in political campaigns and public presentations. For example when Joe Kennedy was an Ambassador to England he had a "coming out" as debutantes party for his daughters which again was an act usually

performed by the most elite families (Hamilton 233-236). When Jack ran for Congress his sisters also hosted house parties and teas with Nigel Hamilton asserting "this [charm] was Jack's secret weapon: the aspect that made all the glad handling worthwhile. At house parties or on the platform, Jack was, increasingly, a stat and he knew it and relished it" (Hamilton 766-767).

Furthermore, one political strategy that particularly worked to the Kennedys' advantage was downplaying their religion, (i.e. Catholic), which Jack Kennedy especially was able to do in his race for the Presidency. Because Jack was accepted as a WASP and because he took on the mantle of WASP in all other aspects of his social style, his religion became less important in the presidential race and many people who came from "Old Money" were willing to overlook the fact that his religion was not Protestant and voted for him. In turn, his being Catholic also helped to secure some votes from Catholics who identified with this part of his identity. Therefore, Jack Kennedy was able to garner votes across religions. Yet, it seems that one of the biggest strengths for Jack Kennedy's political success was his political style.

Because of his style,[55] Jack Kennedy's performance in the White House is considered one of the most memorable. Even his funeral added to the performance of WASPing in the sense that the Kennedys, especially Jackie, elevated it to new heights as Nigel Hamilton argues:

> Jackie's performance as the grieving president's widow certainly surpassed that of Lincoln's widow…By her bearing the young widow imparted a *classical* quality to the proceedings, which themselves took on overtones similar to the burial of Caesar Augustus…Now in her final televised role as outgoing First Lady she instinctively knew it was her duty to canonize her husband's memory and bring his 'reign' to a glorious close… (emphasis added Hamilton xxi).

[55] I also will discuss this further under the aesthetics section.

Again, the Kennedys follow a strategy of WASPing related to the political realm in which Jackie herself makes sure that Jack's legacy will be one of classic elegance. However another aspect of social style aside from the area of performance is the use of language.

Use of Language

Overall, the person most associated with the use of language is Jack Kennedy. He is described as being an eloquent speaker and especially his inaugural address is noted as an exceptional speech.[56] At the time, Kennedy was praised and it is still considered a model for inaugural addresses today as one editor from *The New York Times* states: "Rhetorically, it was very good; if those who heard it will now read it, they will find that it read even better than it sounded" and this largely was due to his use of language (New York Times, 1961 1). Jack Kennedy also was a published author writing *Why England Slept* in 1941, which was his senior thesis at Harvard and became a National Bestseller, and *Profiles of Courage* in 1955 which obtained the Pulitzer Prize (Hamilton 333-338; Burner and West 37-54).

His first book was written at the urging of his father to further WASP for social status as Joe Kennedy Sr. asserted:

> "So, whether you make a cent out of it or not…it will do you an amazing amount of good, particularly if it is well received. You would be surprised how a book that really makes the grade with high-class people stands you in good stead for years to come. I remember that in the report you are asked to make after twenty-five years to the Committee at Harvard, one of the questions is 'What books have you written?' and there is no doubt you will have done yourself a great deal of good" (quoted in Hamilton 333).

[56] Of course it must be noted that John Kennedy did not compose his inaugural address. According to Nancy Carol Arnett: "Ghostwriting is commonplace in the political arena…Theodore Sorensens, however was thought to be Kennedy's primary ghostwriter" (229).

Again, by making sure that his children had the requisite credentials, Joe Kennedy was trying to ensure they would be accepted by WASP society.

Overall, Jack was considered intelligent, an eloquent speaker, literary and used proper English associated with WASPs. In other words, he did not use slang, informal language or incorrect grammar in his public appearances. Yet perhaps more than any other area of social style in which the Kennedys crafted a WASP persona was through the use of commodities.

Use of Commodities

First, the Kennedys had obtained a level of wealth which helped them in their ability to WASP. Nigel Hamilton declares that by 1924 the Kennedys had become millionaires (51). Further, as stated earlier Joe Kennedy made sure that his children received inheritances. Related to this new social status of money, when they were little, the Kennedy children also were driven to school in a chauffer driven limo in Boston (Hamilton 55).Yet aside from money, perhaps one of the quintessential ways that Kennedys WASPed was through the use of commodities with the primary one being location.

By securing a vacation home in the premiere location of Hyannis Port on Cape Cod, The Kennedys ensured that they would be in the heart of WASPdom. As Leo Damore in *The Cape Cod Years of John Fitzgerald Kennedy* stresses Hyannis Port is a center of WASP summers with activities such as strawberry festivals, clam bakes, quilting pageants, softball games, theaters, sailing, and swimming (16-18). In 1926, Joe Kennedy Sr. began this process by renting the Malcolm Cottage (Damore 19). Yet, similar to their reception in Boston the Kennedys were not accepted at first as Damore affirms: “The Kennedys tried to crash Hyannis Port and when they were rebuffed, they banded together against everyone else” (24).

Although they were ostracized at first the Kennedys still spent much of their time there and it evolved into the center of Kennedy family life where they held important family events such as Joe Jr.'s funeral, Robert Kennedy's wedding, and the engagement and wedding of Jack and Jackie (Damore 91-94, 102-103. 136-178). In fact, Jack Kennedy would become forever linked to Cape Cod establishing it as the Summer White House when he was President as Leo Damore states: "As the site of the summer white house, Hyannis Port became internationally known" (241-245).

Leo Damore further asserts: "If a man's roots can exist on a seasonal basis, then it can be said that JFK's existed on Cape Cod—first at his father's house in Hyannis Port, and later at this own house on Irving Avenue. Jack Kennedy considered himself a Cape Codder, although he did not need to be reminded that his identification with the Cape was not acknowledged by all[57]" (v). Therefore, many of the commodities that the Kennedy use to WASP are directly linked to this location of Cape Cod such as owning multiple homes and yachts[58] (Damore 85-86).

Another primary WASP commodity is dress[59] and according to *JFK: Reckless Youth* although they were initially ostracized because of their Irish-Catholic status: "Rose Kennedy's attention to such matters [as dress] was almost a fetish. She was adamant that her children would not go out improperly dressed…" (55). Therefore, she made sure that her children were educated about proper dress according to WASP standards. For example, in a 1948 picture on the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum Web

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[57] To this day, the Kennedys are most often associated with this location and their "Kennedy" compound.

[58] Remember, I discussed sailing earlier as one of the primary leisure activities in which the Kennedys engaged.

[59] While one could certainly discuss dress under the category of aesthetics as well, here I will mainly refer to it as a commodity because it is something that is *bought and utilized* for its aesthetic value.

site, the whole family stands in front of their house in Hyannis Port with each member of the family presenting a WASP aesthetic.

In the photo, Jack is shown wearing a plaid shirt and dress slacks. His brothers, Ted and Robert, wear sweaters with dress shirts underneath and dress slacks while each holds a football. His two sisters wear dress slacks as well and one even has on a lettermen sweater with an "H" that stands for Harvard while the other has on a long dress coat. Finally, his mother wears a long dress coat with pearls while his father has on a dress shirt and dress pants (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum). Again, they emerge as the epitome of a WASP family in their dress and appearances.

In fact, Jack and Jackie were considered to be at the height of fashion of the time and were known for their senses of style. For example in a *Life Magazine* photograph in which they are bringing home one of their children from the hospital, Jack wears a dark suit with a dark tie and white dress shirt while Jackie wears a Chanel hounds tooth suit with long black gloves and a black beret (Life Magazine) In another *National Geographic* photograph when they are having an evening out, Jack Kennedy wears a tuxedo and Jackie wears a white evening gown with long white gloves (National Geographic). Again, I maintain that this use of dress also is how the Kennedys tap into a WASP persona.

Aesthetics

Overall the Kennedys' use of aesthetics exemplifies WASP style and persona as classical and formal as opposed to gaudy, trendy, or flashy. Even when being casual, Jack and Jackie were dressed in WASP style similar to what we now associate with Ralph Lauren clothing (i.e. khaki pants, a crisp white dress shirt, summer dresses with hats, etc.) As first lady, Jackie was known and is often remembered for her classic sense of style such as wearing Chanel suits. In fact, one of her primary functions as first Lady was to

restore the White House in the classic style of Lincoln (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum). Again, we can see how the Kennedys become WASPs by dictating aesthetic taste and culture.

Another ways that Jack and Jackie used aesthetics was by supporting the arts (such as music, theater, and the motion picture industry). While embracing and drawing upon the glamour Hollywood the Kennedys often invited movie stars to the White House. Finally, as a tribute to Jack Kennedy The Kennedy Center continues to be at the heart of supporting and sponsoring the arts today.

Additionally, as the president of the television age Jack Kennedy and Jackie were very aware of their presences in the press. For example for one political event, Jack hired a photographer and according to Leo Damore:

> He arranged a signal with the photographer to indicate when he did not wish a picture to be taken…A rapidly moving target that sunny, warm early summer day, Jack Kennedy greeted his guest in chinos, sweatshirt and sneakers, circulating among them on spacious harbor-front ground and taking apart in the day's gold, swimming, volleyball and softball activities before and after the lobster dinner served a the gold club's dining room (146).

The Kennedys also had photographs taken of events such as the wedding of Jack and Jackie and often was photographed in the White House such as the famous November 21, 1961 Life Magazine spread (Life Magazine). I must note that it is not that other people did not have photo shoots, however, Jack Kennedy seems to be the first to utilize the press specifically to cultivate an aesthetic appeal, (i.e. specifically to emote the glamour and classic style of WASP).

As such, Jack Kennedy often is remembered for his style even sometimes more so than his Presidency with his style being a huge part of his legacy as Steven Stark asserts in "The Cultural Meaning of the Kennedys": "If President Kennedy is still averred today, it's more because of his glamorous style and because he died young than for any specific

accomplishment' (19). Scholar Paul Henggeler parallels this point explaining that Jack Kennedy's legacy is one of style:

> Like the public, they [politicians] were mindful of Kennedy's style, or more precisely, his manner—his wardrobe, and hairstyle, his toothy smile, his walk and hand gestures, his slogans. The rise of John Kennedy altered the stylistic standards by which succeeding presidents sometimes measured greatness, and by which they were measured…The goal was to emote the elusive Kennedy "charisma," an indefinable essence that entailed conflicting qualities of intelligence an courage, detachment and charm, glamour and a common touch, toughness and compassion, humor and seriousness, self-depreciation and confidence (8).

Again, this use of aesthetics by the Kennedys is ultimately a process of WASPing. Overall based upon the use of social styles, the Kennedys drew upon the rhetorical homology of a WASP persona such that today they are viewed as quintessential WASPs and Old Money. They were able to use social style and persona to move beyond SCIP notions of Irish-Catholic to develop a persona that became even more mythologized since John F. Kennedy's death with some labeling his years in the White House as a return to Camelot.

As Dan and Conor Casey uphold in "The Kennedy Chieftains and American Politics": The Kennedys were, after all, the American royals living the American dream—the sons energetic, idealistic young men with attractive wives, surrounded by romping children and attending grandparents… Hyannis was Camelot and the Kennedy *mythos* was firmly established in the American psyche" (90). Further, I argue that what many label as the "Kennedy mystique" is also innately created by the mystique of WASP as a persona manifested in social style. However, I also want to discuss another persona that a political dynasty uses in order to do the opposite of the Kennedys. That is to say while Joe Kennedy, Sr. started the process of WASPing, George Bush Sr. started a process of De-WASPing for his family by drawing upon the rhetorical homology of a

cowboy persona to move away from SCIP notions of his WASP upbringing. Now, I turn to an overview of the cowboy as a rhetorical homology of persona.

FROM WORKING CLASS TO RHETORICAL HOMOLOGY: THE COWBOY PERSONA

If the WASP persona is one that signifies wealth, tradition, and prestige through social style and lifestyle, the cowboy persona signifies a different kind of social style and identity that is rooted in the working class as one of its key signifiers. From an SCIP perspective, it would seem that cowboys would have a primary identity that is solely rooted in class, however, cowboys as a group also include the social categories of gender and race making it more a more complex notion than SCIP would assume. Similar to WASPs, cowboys still exist although they also may be in decline as a group. Yet, I maintain that largely the historical cowboy of the past has been replaced by the mythic cowboy such that now cowboys, like WASPs, are another rhetorical homology of persona.

As William Savage in *Cowboy Life: Reconstructing an American Myth* argues: "The cowboy is the predominant figure in American mythology. More than the explorer, trapper, soldier, or homesteader, the cowboy represents America's westering experience to the popular mind, and his image is everywhere" (3). That is to say in moving from a historical figure to a mythologized working-class hero, the cowboy also has become a persona that is now is mainly exemplified in style. Although there are several complexities and nuances associated with cowboys as a group, here I will discuss the most prominent characteristics and signifiers of this rhetorical homology of persona, which include the following: 1) class, 2) race, and 3) social style and lifestyle that are all permeated by an overriding appeal to masculinity.

Class

As stated earlier, traditionally the image of cowboy is that they were working class and mainly were hired hands because: "The cowboy, it must be remembered, was a hired hand, employed to tend cattle, whether on range or trail, and his work was strenuous and dirty, his hours were long, and his pay was minimal" (Savage 5). As such, cowboys most often worked for others instead of venturing out on their own and starting their own ranches because, according to William Savage, they were unlike the "cattleman" who had "capital resources and management ability necessary for the expansion of the range-cattle industry (6).

In contrast to the "cattleman," Savage explains: "The cowboy was a wage earner, not a capitalist, and only occasionally did he—or could he—rise above that economic level to acquire land or cattle of his own" (6). In this sense, it seems that unlike the image of WASPs as having complete agency over their futures and the leisure to engage in other activities like politics, cowboys signify constraint due to a lack of material wealth. As members of the working class, the image of cowboys is that their subsistence was entirely dependent upon someone else and the land itself.

Yet, many men did move out West because it was an attempt to carve a new life out of the land and became cowboys because: "Cowboying offered escape at someone else's expense. It replaced one kind of boredom with another by substituting the trail for the pasture and the plow" (Savage 6). As such, cowboying was an attempt to start a new life in a new location offering the glimmer of hope that one day cowboys might be able to have a better life out West than back home. Therefore, the cowboy image is most often associated with working class labor because his job required him to perform manual labor in working for someone else's benefit. At the same time directly related to this labor was

the dream of a new beginning and possible wealth. However, another social category of the cowboy persona is that of race.

Race

The image of cowboys is that they were mainly White although there were some ethnic minorities such as African-Americans, Hispanics, and a number of immigrants who moved to the Western Frontier in search of work such that as Richard Slatta, in *The Cowboy Encyclopedia* asserts: "Few ranchers in the American West faced labor shortages" (88). Yet, these ethnic minorities and immigrants also faced discrimination out West according to Slatta (103-104). Therefore, while cowboys are viewed as coming from a somewhat more racially and ethnically diverse background than WASPs, images of cowboys is that they still were largely predominately White.

Again, like WASPs, we can see certain privileges associated with whiteness, however there also seemed to be more fluidity and equality between these various groups out West because often they had to work together and depend upon each other to survive. So while the image of WASPs is that they largely were an exclusive, homogenized group, the image of cowboys is that they were more diverse and did not really have the luxury to be totally exclusive. However, perhaps more than class or race the cowboy persona is one that is created through social style and lifestyle.

Social Style and Lifestyle

First, unlike WASPs, the image of cowboys' educational backgrounds is that they had limited educations because many did not have formal schooling or college as W.S. James avows in "The Cowboy Goes to the School of Nature": "…his education is not especially in letters, except as they are used for brands on cattle" (in Savage 108). Interestingly, one of the ways that this aspect of social style functions politically is that

while the image of ranchers is that they may have had a more formal education related to business matters, however, if they did not have a working knowledge of the land they were perhaps lost without cowboys.

Although many did not have formal educations, James proposes that cowboy signifies a different set of educational skills stating: "The cow-boy goes to the school of nature, learns his lesson from observation and practical experience" (in Savage 108). Therefore, the image of cowboys is that they nevertheless possessed a specialized set of skills and knowledge directly related to their occupations such as working with horses, using firearms, roping, and other skills related to working with both cattle and the land as William Savage says: "Cowboying required no particular skills beyond the initial ability to sit a horse and pay attention" (6). Again, this aspect of social style and lifestyle is in direct contrast to the image of WASP education which is formal and focused on the social graces necessary to succeed in WASP social and professional circles.

As an occupation, cowboying required hard physical labor usually done outside. Unlike WASPs who really did not have to work because they were wealthy, cowboys' jobs signify highly strenuous and what many would label "back-breaking," manual labor. The image of cowboys is that they did not have the luxury to choose to work or not and often worked under the supervision of someone else. As William Savage also puts forward, in *Cowboy Life: Reconstructing an American Myth*, while the cowboy's occupation required travel and a sense of freedom as a result, it also could be lonely and difficult stating: "If the cowboy's life was a difficult one, and if the work limited his prospects for economic betterment in an era when fortunes were made and lost overnight, it is perhaps well to ask why cowpunching attracted men" (6). Again, it seems that politically while cowboys are seen as having some agency, this agency is limited because

they are dependent upon others. Yet another area related to occupation that exemplifies social style and lifestyle is that of commodities.

One commodity with which the cowboy persona is forever linked is that of location because the West was considered a "virgin" land to be claimed[60]. Therefore, cowboys are viewed as mainly located in Western locations such as Texas, Oklahoma, California, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana to name a few. So whereas WASP locations were mainly viewed as located on the East Coast in "more-developed" places, cowboys are seen as Western pioneers because out West there were more "open spaces" for settlement and development.

Another commodity with which the cowboy image is linked is horses because they relied on them so much for their jobs as Sweet and Knox in the book *On a Mustang Through Texas* explain:

> The cowboy is a man attached to a gigantic pair of spurs. He inhabits the prairies of Texas, and is successfully raised as far North as the thirtieth degree of latitude. He is in season all the year round, and is generally found on the back of a small mustang pony, 'wild and savage as a colt of the Ukraine.' This fact has given rise to a widely diffused belief that the cowboy cannot walk; and he is often cited as an instance—a stupendous manifestation, in fact—of the wonderful working of Nature to adapt her creatures to the circumstances surrounding them. It is argued that once the cowboy was a human being,—a biped with the ordinary powers of locomotion,—but that during the course of ages, becoming more and more attached to his horse, and having gradually ceased to use his legs, these important adjuncts have been incapacitated for pedestrian uses, and thus the cowboy and his pony have developed into a hybrid union of man and horse,—an inferior kind of centaur (in Savage 176-177).

Directly tied in with the ability to ride a horse is an image of masculinity[61] because often cowboys are seen as demonstrating their manhood by "breaking" horses to get them

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[60] Of course, the West was already settled by Native Americans as well as Mexicans.

[61] I will further discuss masculinity in the aesthetics section.

ready for work on ranches. Further another commodity related to the image of cowboys working with horses is the saddle as The National Life Stock Association says:

> The cowboy's saddle was unlike that of most other horsemen, and among his personal belongings his chief interest centered upon it and it was the pride of his heart. It was customary in most parts of the range country for him to provide his horse-gear at his own cost, and his willingness to spend his hard-earned money for what he regarded as a fine saddle usually ran into rank extravagance. For one that had struck deep into his fancy he would eagerly give up his pay of several months, and be happy with his acquisition until some crafty saddler brought out another that out-classed it in ornateness. The old-time cowboy's saddle was a heavy, strongly-made affair, with both cantle and pommel, or horn, very high, and with large skirts. The high cantle would seem to have been of no general utility or advantage, but the high and strong pommel was a daily necessity in his business, for it came into play in various ways (in Savage 177-180).

As far as dress is concerned, the image of cowboys is that they wore those clothing items that were durable, rugged, and could put up with the rough climate of the West and also had generally a masculine aesthetic. Therefore, they are viewed as wearing boots, chaps, spurs, and hats to name a few items. Again, The National Life Stock Association reveals:

> But considerations of the picturesque had nothing to do with fixing the characteristic dress of the cowboy. This, like its wearer, was an evolution—a product of conditions that was adapted to the service it had to render; and its wearer had no thought of real or imaginary theatrical effects the combination might produce. The broad-brimmed, soft felt hat, with the brim turned up in front, was to him the most serviceable known form of head-gear; and this and his leather "chaps" or overalls, often of goat-skin tanned with the hair on and worn with the hair outside, were the more conspicuous features in the make-up of his working costume. His other clothing was such as he found "ready-made" in the clothing stores of the country towns. He wore a heavy, loose-fitting flannel shirt with a handy pocket or two in it, and a large handkerchief, usually of bright-colored silk, tied around his neck. His trousers, which were kept in place by a belt—never by suspenders—were tucked into the tops of his boots; but the chaps came down full length over the trousers and boots and touched the ground—often dragging a little. His body-covering was easy-fitting and free, but that of his feet was quite different. Here he would wear nothing but tight-fitting boots— the tighter the better in his estimation, and these boots must have very high heels. Their tightness and their lofty heel had a sort of crippling effect when he was upon the ground,

> and in walking he went sometimes with a kind of toddling gait. However, as the cowboy seldom walked and never very far, his foot-gear, uncomfortable as it would seem to have been, never troubled him much. But in the cowboy era the wearing of high-heeled tight boots, things that are only occasionally seen nowadays, was not confined to his fraternity. They were common then, and nearly every Western man wore them, and would have considered himself quite "out of style" with any other kind on his feet—especially when he was "dressed up." It has been said that the high heel of the cowboy's boot was for the purpose of keeping his foot from slipping forward through the stirrup, and thus putting him in an ugly predicament should he be thrown by some mishap. But as many of them had leather hoods attached to the front of their stirrups to prevent this—hoods which sometimes were very extravagant in the consumption of leather in their making—and as all cowboys refused other than high heels, this explanation seems hardly to fit the case. However, their dress, including their favorite boots, was satisfactory to them, and, as a whole, was perfectly suited to their business in life. Their chaps were taken over from the Mexicans, but the rest of their apparel was developed by them along the lines of "natural selection." (in Savage 177-180).

Another commodity that is particularly connected to the cowboy image is that of firearms because according to William Savage:

> By taking up the gun, the cowboy ensured his future as America's most persistent, and therefore most significant, myth… Nowadays the cowboy and the gunfighter are virtually inseparable in the western, be it novel or film...The cowboy, historically once unpopular and seemingly unsavory, has Thus become supremely interesting. The eye is drawn to him because he packs iron, and one never knows when he will cut loose and shoot something or somebody. He is still largely fun-loving and at least partly honorable, but he is considerably more dangerous than he used to be. He stands ready to demonstrate the ability that Americans throughout their history have longed to possess—the ability, in time of crisis, to reach the ultimate resolution (10).

Paralleling this point The National Life Stock Association says: “The cowboy's strictly personal outfit was completed by the addition of a trustworthy revolver, usually of heavy caliber, that could be depended on in emergencies to open a way for daylight through the bodies of hostile creatures he encountered, including those of his own species; and a pair of huge spurs that rarely were used up to their full capacity for stirring up a horse or for punishing him” (in Savage 179). Politically, cowboys are viewed as

creating their own laws in the sense that if they felt someone was being unjust or if they had a disagreement these matters often could be settled with a gun. In this sense, the image of cowboys is that they have agency that is directly tied in with masculinity because confrontations were seen as being settled by force or death which parallels images of their overall behaviors and manners.

If WASP manners signify a formal style, cowboys signify a more informal and some would argue crude or "gruff" style. Because they often were isolated from other people and mainly worked around other men, the image of cowboys is that they did not have to have polished social graces like WASPs. The National Live Stock Association asserts: "Before the close of the period of the trail and of the open range the western cowboys had developed traits, manners, and practices that may be said to have made them a separate class of men…Their manner of living and the routine of their occupation were the same from Texas to Montana…" (in Savage 175-176). In other words, the image of cowboys is that they developed their own practices and manners that largely were rooted in masculinity.

The image of cowboys' use of language also is that it was less formal than WASPs although they did develop specialized language related to their occupations. *The Cowboy Encyclopedia* reveals: "So much of the American cowboy's equipment, language, and work habits comes from the Mexican vaquero…" and because of this connection, many specialized terms associated with cowboying such as their duties, clothing, and culture are Spanish (in Slatta 114).

Overall, the image of a cowboy aesthetic is linked to masculinity meaning ruggedness, toughness, and a bravado which has been embellished and transformed from a historical reality to a mythologized figure. As Richard Slatta claims: "Cowboy culture was a masculine culture. Women in ranch country were few and far between. Like locker

room and barracks humor, cowboy humor and language was often obscene. When in town, most cowboys enjoyed plenty of whiskey, gambling, and a visit to the local brothel" (253). In becoming a mythologized figure of popular culture, he further states:

> Cowboy imagery remains strongly masculine. Television ads during professional football games used cowboy imagery to push items such as pickup trucks, beer, and chewing tobacco (smoking tobacco ads now being banned on television). Clothing companies such as Wranglers and Levi's have spent countless millions to associate their jeans with the rodeo and ranch cowboy. The cowboy is likewise a mainstay of ads for boot manufacturers. Cowboy marketing, however, aims at both blue-collar and upscale urban (yuppie) audiences. Male-oriented advertisements tie cowboy manliness to a plethora of products (Slatta 284).

As this statement reveals, cowboy social style and lifestyle still prevail today. Again, I argue that this social style and lifestyle, like WASPs, moved from a historical figure to a mythologized working class hero by the Hollywood industry with representations of the cowboy as the Western hero. He has become a lone-rider who faces evil and works on the range while striving for justice. Some quintessential representations of cowboys in popular media such as *Shane* (1953), John Wayne films like *Rio Bravo* (1959) and *The Alamo* (1960) Clint Eastwood movies like *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and *Pale Rider* (1985) as well as the recent film *Brokeback Mountain*[62] (2005). Now, I want to turn to a brief biography of one political family, the Bushes, who manage to use the rhetorical homology of a cowboy person as a strategy of De-WASPing and move beyond SCIP notions of their WASP roots.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE BUSH FAMILY

Born on June 12, 1924, George Herbert Walker Bush, was the son of Prescott Bush, a wealthy investment banker who became a partner in Brown Brothers Harriman

[62] Although many argue that the film *Brokeback Mountain* tries to disrupt the Western hero by complicating notions of sexuality, I argue that it still draws upon conventions of the Western working class hero in doing so.

Company and was a Senator for Connecticut from 1952-1962 (George Bush Presidential Library; Kelley 42-43). Prescott attended St. George's private school and Yale University where he was a legacy and became a member of the elite secret society, the Skull and Bones (Kelley 7-21). As Kitty Kelley argues in *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*: "If it's true that, as one Yale man said 'there will always be two Yale's—The Old Blues and the rest of us' Prescott Bush was an Old Blue" (9). In other words, the Bushes were Old Money and could trace their family roots back to the founding fathers of the nation.

George H.W. Bush's mother, Dorothy Walker, was the granddaughter of David Davis Walker "one of the seventy three hundred millionaires in the United States in 1914" (Kelley 24). Her father George H. Walker, "Bert," was a wealthy entrepreneur as Kelley contends that after creating G.H. Walker and Company, "Within a few years, Bert had built a financial empire that would become the family's mother lode, bankrolling the fortunes of Walker and Bush sons and sons-in law through the generations…Bert Walker left his name as his imprint: the Walker Cup; Walker's Point in Maine; G.H. Walker and Company…" (Kelley 28). Therefore, George H.W. Bush came from a wealthy family of "Old blue-bloods" or WASPs.

After attending the prestigious private school, Phillips Andover Academy, George H.W. Bush became a Navy pilot during World War II (Kelley 63-73). After returning from the war, he married Barbara Pierce[63], the granddaughter of an Ohio Supreme Court justice and daughter of a Vice-President of McCall Corporation, on January 6, 1945[64] (Kelley 87-88). George H.W. Bush then attended Yale University, following in his

[63] Barbara Pierce also is related to the fourteenth president Franklin Pierce (Schweizer and Schweizer 67).
[64] According to the George Bush Presidential Library, George H.W. and Barbara Bush "have five children: George, John (Jeb), Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy Bush Koch. Their second child, Robin, died of leukemia in 1953" (George Bush Presidential Library).

father's footsteps and also became a member of the Skull and Bones society (Kelley 89-100).

From an SCIP perspective, George Herbert Walker Bush would be considered a quintessential WASP, a blue-blood of Old Money because he came from a very wealthy family, was educated at the most prestigious schools, and became a member of one of America's most elite and secret societies. However, contrary to his WASP roots, George H.W. Bush decides to move beyond SCIP notions of his identity by moving his family out West to Texas and beginning the process of De-WASPing that ultimately would be most embraced by his son, George W. Bush. As Cannon, Barnes, and Fenoglio argue in "Family Tree: Party Roots": "It started for Bush when he physically left New England" and moved out West to Texas (2311). Now, turning to a *micro* approach I discuss specific examples of how the Bushes use a strategy of De-WASPing to move beyond SCIP notions of their identities which helped father and son ascend to the White House.

CREATING THE OLD WEST: THE BUSHES' SOCIAL STYLE AS A STRATEGY OF DE-WASPING[65]

While the Kennedy family's goal was to escape its Irish-Catholic roots and become WASP, the Bush family sought to do the opposite and De-WASP by moving away from their Old Money beginnings. Considered blue-bloods whose roots go back to Senator Prescott Bush, George H.W. Bush decided to move to Texas to pursue a career in the oil business and started a process of De-WASPing that would continue through to his son current President George W. Bush. Again, similar to the Kennedys, the Bushes did not simply exchange one identity for another. Instead, they also demonstrate the fluidity of identities for strategic purposes because they still possess the ability to return to their original identities or move back and forth between being WASPs and cowboys through

[65] Here I will mostly use examples of George Herbert Walker Bush (George H.W.) and George Walker Bush (George W).

the use of social styles and personae. In creating this new identity through the use of a rhetorical homology of the cowboy persona, one of the first areas that the Bushes use as a strategy to De-WASP is that of performance.

Performance

Similar to the Kennedys, both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush attended Phillips Andover Academy, a prestigious private school and an Ivy-league college, Yale University, where they both became members of the Skill and Bones society (Schweizer and Schweizer 148-154). In this sense, the Bushes are at two of the very centers of WASPdom. Yet, it is in the area of occupation that George H.W. Bush moves his family into the process of De-WASPing by literally moving them from Connecticut to Texas[66] and pursuing a career in the oil industry. As Cannon, Barnes, and Fenoglio state:

> In one of the more memorable lines of her storied career, Texas writer Molly Ivins insisted that [George H.W.] Bush would never truly be accepted in the Lone Star State, because "real Texans do not use the word summer as a verb ... and do not wear blue slacks with little green whales allover them." Be that as it may, Bush did move his family to West Texas in1948—and started a company in the oil business. "He could have stayed in the beautiful confines of Connecticut and done well. But he wanted to do it on his own. Not be Daddy's boy," Lance Tarrance, a Houston-based GOP pollster, once observed. "There's excitement about not wanting to fit into the old patterns. So he came to Odessa, Texas (2311).

In other words, while he could have remained on the East Coast and stepped into the family business, George H.W. Bush decided to venture out on his own.[67] Similar to the Kennedys, at first the Bushes were not accepted by their Texas neighbors as Peter and Rochelle Schweizer argue in *The Bushes: Portrait of a Dynasty*: "Although Barbara was

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[66] I will also discuss Texas as a location under commodities.

[67] Of course, it can certainly be argued that one of the reasons that Bush was able to go into the oil business in the first place is because of his family background and connections as Schweizer and Schweizer revel that he got his start because the head of Dresser Industries, a family friend, offered him a chance (95). Kelley furthers this point as well saying: "What Prescott Bush did provide, [his son H.W.] though, were the golden cords of his invaluable personal connections…" (99-100).

outgoing and friendly, making friends was still not easy as she had so little in common with her neighbors. And George [H.W.] had managed to move to one of the few places in the United States where a Yale background and New England pedigree worked heavily against you. 'We find some west Texans are…Eastern-prejudiced,' Barbara wrote her family" (96). However, leaving Odessa to move to Midland, eventually the Bushes were able to fit in as Schweizer and Schweizer also emphasize:

> George and Barbara were newcomers in town, but so was just about everybody else in Midland's burgeoning oil business…The sons of America's aristocracy were also in Midland trying to make the next big strike. The Gettys, the Mellons, and the Rockefellers all had young men in town down their bidding. So while Midland was pure West Texas, it also boasted a Harvard Club, a Yale Club, and a Princeton Club (99).

In fact, this move to Midland may also be one of the reasons that the Bushes were able to be accepted because many people in this area were also newcomers from Old Money. Next, after a successful stint in oil, the Bushes moved from Midland to Houston which Kelley reveals: "Texans say the difference between Midland and Houston is the difference between no riches and nouvea riches. Midland is where you strike oil, and Houston is where you go after the first gusher" (204). In this sense, the Bushes start to become more associated with Texans who have power and control because of the oil industry.

By being more accepted as Texan, George H.W. was able to launch a career in Texas politics and he became a Senator in 1963 (Schweizer and Schweizer 143-147). Over the course of his political career, George H.W. Bush was appointed to the United Nations, was an Ambassador to China, was the head of the CIA, became Vice-President under Ronald Regan and ultimately became the 41st President of the United States (Schweizer and Schweizer 143-147; 245-253; 285-287; 326-327).

Similar to his father, George W. Bush also relocated from the East Coast to Texas. Although he was educated at Yale, he too moved to Texas by getting his start in the oil industry like his father. George W. also became a manger of the Texas Rangers, entered politics by becoming the governor of Texas, and finally became the 43rd President of the United States (Schweizer and Schweizer 386-391; 413-427; 497-512). Therefore, for the Bushes, the first area of performance in De-WASPing was related to both occupation and making *two* separate moves to Texas. The next area of performance in drawing upon the rhetorical homology of a cowboy persona to De-WASP that the Bushes use in creating their social styles is that of leisure activities.

While the Kennedys are most often associated with yachting or sailing, the Bushes are most often associated with "America's favorite pastime," baseball. Both George H.W. Bush and George W. played baseball at Yale University (Schweizer and Schweizer 90, 167). In fact, George W. eventually became linked to sports in Texas as the owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team (386-391). So while the Kennedys sought WASP activities, the Bushes seem to choose sports that are associated with being "regular guys." In fact, George H.W. and George W. often are shown fishing on their boats as opposed to engaging in yacht races. For example, in an image from the Washington Post, George H.W. and W are shown fishing off of their boat *Fidelity* with George H.W. wearing a dress shirt, jeans and casual shoes. His son, W., wears jeans a T-shirt, a baseball cap, and sneakers (Washington Post.com). George W. also engages in several activities that are associated with his Crawford, Texas ranch.[68]

Another area of performance is that of marriage. While George H.W. Bush married Barbara, who also has a WASP background, George W. married Laura Welch, a local Midland, Texas woman who attended Southern Methodist University, was a former

[68] I will further discuss this ranch and the activities associated with it under commodities.

elementary school teacher, and received a Master's degree in library science from the University of Texas (Schweizer and Schweizer 259-260). In a sense, George W.'s marriage to Laura also served to strengthen his process of De-WASPing because her occupation and background were unlike his WASP upbringing[69]. As Kitty Kelly argues "After studying the bloodlines of American presidents, Gary Roberts of the New England Historic Genealogical Society found that the Bush men are far less important than the women they marry" and I argue that the marriage to Laura Bush is important in this same sense. In other words, politically this marriage helps W. to become more authentically Texan because he marries a "local gal" (610).

The next area of De-WASPing is that of behavior and manners. While the Kennedys are said to have been at the height of social graces and with Jack Kennedy as the perfect gentleman, George W. Bush is know for behaving like a "jock" or for having uncouth manners that are steeped in masculinity and bravado. For example in her book *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*, Kitty Kelley cites several examples of W.'s inappropriate behaviors such as when he "…was seen on national television sitting behind the Ranger's dugout picking his nose. He was unembarrassed. 'Anything that makes me look like the common man is great,' he said. 'Just great.'" (545).

She also explains that in his first campaign for President: "He swaggered and smirked and seemed to enjoy shocking people with his exaggerated machismo. He cursed constantly…Years later reporters would be astonished by some of George's obscenity. David Fink, formerly with *The Hartford Courant*, was stunned when he asked George what he and his father talked about. George's response: 'Pussy." (584). She also cites another incident saying: "When Tucker Carson interviewed the governor for *Talk* magazine, he too, was surprised by George's vulgarity. Carson asked about a rumor that

[69] Again, I am not arguing that this was solely done for political reasons and/or done consciously.

the Gore campaign had a photograph of Bush dancing nude on top of a bar. 'They think it's like a high school election,' George said, 'where if you beat up your opponent enough you can win. They've lost their fucking minds'" (585).

In fact, George W. is known as the black sheep of the family because of his behaviors when he was younger wherein he engaged in drinking and partying although now he is a "born-again" Christian (Kelley 350, Schweizer and Schweizer 233-237, 303-306, 331-337). Schweizer and Schweizer divulge another incident where he curses at Al Hunt, who worked for the *Wall Street Journal*, when they were both in a Dallas restaurant suggesting: "The incident was the latest in what had been a long chain, and the family was weary of it. W. had his four Bs—beer, bourbon, and B&B. It had been funny enough when he was in college, but now he was becoming an embarrassment, and the family let him know that things needed to change" (331). It can be said that this partying or drinking serves to reinforce his uncouth or what some would label "bad boy" behavior which again is the opposite of Kennedy begin viewed as a gentleman. In other words, W.'s behavior seems more like the cowboy through his reliance upon and use of machismo.

However, one of the main areas of performance in which the Bushes use a strategy of De-WASPing through the rhetorical homology of a cowboy persona is that of politics. Early in his political career when George W. ran for Congress in Texas, he was labeled as a "carpetbagger" and a "spoiled rich kid" from back East. As Kitty Kelley alleges when he ran again Kent Hance: "Nobody 'talked Texas' better than Kent Hance, who entertained rural farmers with country jokes, usually at George's expense" (545). Schweizer and Schweizer in, *The Bushes Portrait of a Dynasty*, also reveal that he was out "Texas-ed" by Hance stating:

> Hance was a local boy, the son of farmers, who had graduated from Dimmitt (Texas) High School, Texas Tech, and the University of Texas Law School before begin elected to the state senate. He talked the language of the district's farmer and ranchers, and knew hundreds of people by name. 'My daddy and granddaddy were farmers,' he would tell people on the stump. '…and Bush's father has been in politics all his life…George Bush hasn't earned the living he enjoys. I'm on my own two feet and could make my own living' (263).

However, George W. wanted to prevent this from happening again so when he ran for governor and especially in his candidacy for President he drew heavily upon Texas images such as campaigning on back of pickup truck, wearing cowboy hats with boots and jeans, and looking "tough" at his opponents during debates. (E.g. See images from the article "Bush Country"). Even as President of the United States George W. is known for his "macho" tactics such as landing a fighter jet on the *USS Abraham Lincoln* on May 1, 2003 in a manner reminiscent of the movie *Top Gun* (in Kelley after 482).

Furthermore, similar to Jack Kennedy, George W. Bush has been able to use his religious background for political gain. As an evangelical, "born-again," Christian, George W. has not tried to downplay his religion like Jack Kennedy. Instead, W. has stressed his religion. Consequently, this emphasis on religion is a part of the reason for his political success because George W.'s evangelical beliefs connect with the views of a growing number of American voters. Simultaneously, because he is a WASP, other WASPs voters are willing to overlook the fact that he is not Protestant and as such he also is able to capture these votes. Yet, another area of social style in which the Bushes De-WASP is the use of language.

Use of Language

Again, here I will limit this focus to George W. who is well-known for his faulty speech and being what some people call the "unrhetorical president" as David Crockett says in "George W. Bush and the Unrhetorical Presidency":

> It is conventional wisdom that President George W. Bush is not a gifted rhetorician. James A. Barnes of the National Journal said Bush was "an uneven communicator who is usually more effective in a conversational setting than in delivering a formal speech." Fred I. Greenstein wrote that Bush "began his presidency with an unassertive, less-than-fluent approach to public communication," and that he was "awkward and unpolished." Gloria Borger of U.S. News and World Report acknowledged that Bush "has never been known for his ornate communication skills." Despite some praise for Bush's rhetoric following the September 11 terrorist attack, the general trend soon reverted to criticism of Bush as "an oratorical version of Cinderella" at midnight, known for "tortured prose" and "rhetorical missteps" both at home and abroad… The above quote from Jeffrey K. Tulis's *The Rhetorical Presidency* seems to indicate that a president with Bush's apparent lack of oratorical skill will be greatly handicapped in office. After all, Bush is clearly no John F. Kennedy, nor is he a "great communicator" in the vein of his party's patron saint, Ronald Reagan (465-466).

Despite his prestigious educational background, he often mispronounces words, uses incorrect grammar and pronunciation, and sounds uneducated. In fact, because of his repeated problems with language usage, he often is the butt of jokes and now his guffaws are labeled as "Bushisms" such as the following taken from the Web site, The Truth About George.com: 1) "We will stand up for terror. We will stand up for freedom;" 2) "So for the students here, take heart in this concept. He gets a Ph.D. I get Cs. I'm the President and he's the advisor;" and 3) "With the [2004] campaign over, Americans are expecting a bipartisan effort and results. I'll reach out to everyone who shares our goals"[70] (The Truth About George.com). Unlike Jack Kennedy, he is known for his lack of public speaking ability and it also seems as if he has a difficult time expressing himself in public.

Another way that he uses language to De-WASP is that he speaks with a Texas accent or hint of "twang" and often uses colloquialisms such as "That dog don't hunt," that are commonly associated with Southern and Southwestern dialect. Therefore, many

[70] There are a number of other "Bushisms" on this site and others so that I have limited his language usage to these few examples as a sampling of how this De-WASPing occurs.

people argue that he sounds "like a regular guy" instead of someone who was educated at one of the most prestigious Ivy-league institutions. However, another area related to language that the whole family seems to embrace is denying the fact that they are a political dynasty.

As Peter and Rochelle Schweizer point out, the Bushes often compare themselves to the Kennedy family to show how much they are not a political dynasty considering themselves the "un-Kennedys" (xiv). Schweizer and Schweizer further assert that if you:

> Ask Bush family member whether they consider themselves a dynasty and you are likely to get a strong reaction. Family member will grimace, roll their eyes, or simply shake their heads. 'D and L-those two words, dynasty and legacy—irritate me,' says former president [George H.W.] Bush. 'We don't feel entitled to anything.'…. The Bush hostility to the very notion of dynasty must run deep because it runs contrary to the myth that they are self-made (543).

Likewise, Kitty Kelley insists: "For years George Herbert Walker Bush has acted indignant if anyone describes his family as a political dynasty" (607). Again, the Bushes are using a strategy of De-WASPing to move beyond SCIP notions of their WASP roots and instead want to appear as everyone else (i.e. that they were able to achieve the American Dream through hard work). The telling of their family story also links to the rhetorical homology of the cowboy persona because they often recount how they moved out West and supposedly carved out a fortune from nothing. Now I want to turn to another aspect of social style in which the Bushes De-WASP, their use of commodities.

Use of Commodities

If the Kennedys are most often associated with Cape Cod, then the Bushes are most often associated with two locations. The first location is Kennebunkport, Maine, which can be seen as paralleling the "Kennedy compound," where the Bushes have their WASP root, and George H.W. Bush spent much of his time as President. The second location, Crawford, Texas, is most often associated with George W. Bush. While Cape

Cod was John F. Kennedy's "summer White House," George W. Bush uses his Crawford ranch to conduct official White House business and it can be seen as the second White House. As Bill Whitaker asserts in "From the Heart of Bush Country": "The president, after all, claims to find solace in this land and share the down-home values of many of it people…" (25). Therefore, the Bushes, especially W., are associated with Texas and his ranch.

George W. also often is shown doing various activities and using commodities that are related to his ranch such as hunting, shooting, and or simply doing work in the yard. For example in photographs accompanying the article "From the Heart of Bush Country," in one photo the President is shown driving a pickup truck wearing a cowboy hat, in a second photo he sits on the back of a pickup truck dress in dirty jeans, a T-shirt, and a cowboy hat pointing out something to another man who is dressed similarly; and finally in a third picture he is shown dressed in his cowboy gear sweating and carrying lumber (23-27). Therefore, he tries to associate himself with the work that cowboys or ranch hands usually conduct as a "regular guy."

Similar to the Kennedy who owned yachts, the Bushes also own them, however instead of engaging in races, they are shown fishing which is another "working man's" sport. For example a picture from The George Bush Presidential Library shows George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, and "Jeb" Bush on a fishing boat dressed in the jackets baseball teams such as the Chicago Cubs and baseball hats with a "T" for the Texas Rangers (George Bush Presidential Library).

As far as dress[71] is concerned, although he wears suits George W. often is shown dressed in jeans, a T-shirt, a cowboy hat, and cowboy boots to play up his connection to

[71] Again, while one could certainly discuss dress under the category of aesthetics, here I will mainly refer to it as a commodity because it is something that is *bought and utilized* for its aesthetic value.

Texas. For, both inaugurals of George H.W. and George W Bush, each wore custom-made cowboy boots to the celebrations. In fact, according to the article, "These Boots Were Made for Running":

> It took another Ivy Leaguer, President George [H.W.] Bush (Yale '48), the Texas governor's father and a transplanted Texan from Connecticut, to return the style of wearing boots with dress suits to the White House. Bush had more than 20 pairs of $300 boots handmade by Rocky Carroll, a boot maker in Houston, and he once hoisted the cuffs of his pants to reveal boots embossed with a full-color Texas state flag (Steel 643).

Finally, within family legend the commodity that is most often associated with the physical move to Texas is the red Studebaker that was owned by George H.W. Bush. In other words, unlike the Kennedys who had chauffeur-driven limos, George H.W. Bush drove his family out West on his own again trying to demonstrate how they are "regular folks" and not members of the elite (Schweizer and Schweizer 95-96; Kelley 101). Finally, the last area of social style related to Bushes embracing cowboy persona and De-WASPing is that of aesthetics.

Aesthetics

Overall, the Bushes use of aesthetics is moderate and could be labeled as trying to tap into a country or Texas style. When compared to Kennedys, their style is less eloquent or classic, but this factor also could be due to the current fashions. For example, in a picture of George W., Laura, and their two daughters, W and Laura are casually dressed and their daughters wear jeans and shirts that have the American flag on them (Washington Post.com). It can be said that mainly their use of aesthetics is more in-line with a country style, that is steeped in masculinity for George W, than that of "Old Money." In other words, the Bushes seem to embrace a more "down-home" style than the Kennedys.

Overall, the Bushes seem to downplay their WASP roots and embrace the Texas style wholeheartedly and this embracing especially is the case with W. who likes to position himself as just another Texan. Therefore, like the Kennedys, it seems likely that the Bushes also were able to go against SCIP notions of their identities and did so to the point that now they are accepted as real Texans. Kitty Kelley provides evidence supporting this transformation from WASPs to Texans explaining: "The man who beat George in 1978 [Kent Hance] became one of his biggest supporters in [the] 1994 [gubernatorial race]" (544).

Similarly, Schweizer and Schweizer argue that this De-WASPing also might be a reason that the Bushes have been successful in the political arena suggesting:

> The Bushes are also curiously different from other American dynasties in that they have consciously chosen to take a path of inverse social climbing over the past half century. While the other great American families rose to aristocratic stature and maintained their positions as select and unique, the Bushes have in many respects moved in the opposite direction…Politically, this sort of devolution has allowed him [W.] to succeed where others might have failed (546).

Therefore while the Kenendys had to WASP for political success, the Bushes have had to utilize an opposite strategy. However, remember I am not arguing that it was simply a matter of exchanging one identity for another in either the case of the Kennedys or Bushes. I believe that inherent in the strategy of WASPing and De-WASPing, as with other identity creations, both the Kennedys and the Bushes retain the ability to return to their "original" identities as well as the ability to move on to new ones beyond their current identity creations. That is to say, that they are able to move fluidity between various identities and this creation is based upon the employment of strategies for political gain. Yet, both the examples of the Bushes and Kennedys also seem to point to changes in conceptions of the American dream and the nature of politics over time.

TWO ICONS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM AND IMPLICATIONS

As rhetorical homologies of personae, one could argue that the WASP and the cowboy are just two versions of the American dream. As stated earlier, WASPs as Old Money historically were considered the leaders and founders of the nation. In contrast, cowboys are more directly connected to a version of the American dream in which they carve out an existence from nothing thereby embodying a working class hero.[72] The persona WASP seems to be what people aspire to become because WASP is seen as the quintessential American. Yet, the cowboy is another version of Americans as rugged individuals making it against all odds and creating their own fortunes.

Nevertheless, both of these rhetorical homologies of personae suggest that the American people like to believe that anyone can achieve wealth and success through hard work. The cowboy is particularly interesting because it seems that over time there has been a move away from WASPs being on display as much. In other words, everyone in the United States wants to believe that there is no such thing as class and that everyone is middle class. As such, WASPs seem to keep a lower profile than in the past and many people who are wealthy claim to be middle-class so they fit in with the rest of society.

In the past, for the Kennedys as immigrants the goal of WASPing was to become more accepted as "traditional" Americans during the time because the Irish were still seen as the lowest class of citizens. The Bushes, on the other hand, want to appear as "regular" folks because WASP is contra to the way that people want to see themselves as Americans today. Today, it seems as if money and privilege function more under the surface than in the past. Therefore, I propose that for many the American Dream is to be

[72] Of course, the Native Americans were here so that moving out West was not simply a matter of moving into new virgin land that was not already claimed by others.

a WASP, i.e. having all the privileges of money and power, but not necessarily appearing as such because people want to seem like everyone else.

Many would argue that Kennedys and Bushes can use a strategy of WASPing or De-WASPing because they have the money, power, and privilege to do so and these assets certainly help especially on the national political circuit. However this process of WASPing and DeWASPing also occurs by "regular" people as well. A May 2005 *New York Times* article, "When the Jones Wear Jeans," suggests that the old markers of status are not the same as they were in the past maintaining:

> Social class, once so easily assessed by the car in the driveway or the purse on the arm, has become harder to see in the things Americans buy. Rising incomes, flattening prices and easily available credit have given so many Americans access to such a wide array of high-end goods that traditional markers of status have lost much of their meaning. A family squarely in the middle class may own a flat-screen television, drive a BMW and indulge a taste for expensive chocolate. A wealthy family may only further blur the picture by shopping for wine at Costco and bath towels at Target, which for years has stocked its shelves with high-quality goods… (Steinhauer 1).

For example, a person may try to move up class lines and achieve social mobility through social style and drawing upon a rhetorical homology of persona. Although this may not be on as large a scale as the Kennedys, the person may still utilize a strategy of WASPing. The reason that the person decides to utilize one of these strategies also may not be for political reasons in overall political sense with a capital "P," but nevertheless could be political in sense of little "p" and the everyday tactics that Michel Decerteau in "The Practice of Everyday Life" mentions as a "politic of ploys" (in Highmore 73, 68-1).

This same tactic also can occur wherein a person uses a strategy of De-WASPing, like the Bushes, through social style and a rhetorical homology of persona so that a person who was born rich may decide to purse a working class occupation or adopt language, dress, and commodities that are commonly associated with the working class.

Or, due to a promotion or because they want a change of scenery a person may move to a new location and then take on the social styles of this area and "go native" as anthropologists use to suggest about researchers who adopted the cultures of the places they were studying.

Further as more jobs have moved South, aspects of Southern culture, which once were considered "low" culture compared to Northeast WASP enclaves, is now becoming more mainstream with a rise in Americans who attend NASCAR and/or watch it on television, dress casually in jeans a T-shirt, wear cowboy gear, and/or listen to country music, as a 1992 *Economist* article, "Country Style" asserts the country style itself is becoming more popular (1). Regardless of actual income levels, more Americans also seem to identify with being "blue-collar" even if they hold a traditionally "white-collar" job which may attest to the changing nature of American politics.

Overall, I believe that the two examples support Roderick Hart's argument in *Seducing America: How Television Charms the Modern Voter* that the nature of American politics today is largely rooted in personality with people wanting to elect others based upon their being like everyone else. Joshua Meyrowitz in, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*, also makes a similar argument when he asserts that due to the rise of mass media: "…our political leaders are being stripped of their aura [or the mystique of being great leaders] and are being brought down closer to the level of the average person (270).

In this sense, ultimately we can see the Kennedys and Bushes as a reflection of this change in politics. While Jack Kennedy won the election because of his ability and power to become a WASP, Bush defeated his opponents because he was considered more "down-home" and "folksy" than they were despite his WASP roots. Therefore, I believe that these examples attest to how mass media has caused there to be more of a focus on

social style and personae in the political realm and that those people who will be successful in their political aspirations will be those people who present the "right" rhetorical homology of persona which taps into the overall public majority's view of themselves.

Thus, I believe that the two examples point to the fact that identity creation and formation is continually moving beyond SCIP in several cases even at the height of politics. In other words, I believe these examples point to the fluidity, multiplicity, and play that we have with our identities through the use of social style and rhetorical homologies of personae. In the next and final chapter, I will provide conclusions to the dissertation discussing the overall implications of this project, its limitations, and further questions that it raises as well future research that can be undertaken in this area.

Ch 6: Conclusion-Contemplating the Future: Parting Thoughts on Identity as Created Through the Rhetoric of Social Style

> "Our identities are influenced, among other things, by what we consume, what we wear, the commodities we buy, what we see and read, how we conceive our sexuality, what we think of society and the changes we believe it is undergoing. Our identities are formed, partly, by what we think of ourselves, and how we relate to everyday life. Of course, the role of language and culture is crucial in all this. Advertising, fashion, popular culture and the mass media are also powerful institutions to be considered" Madan Sarup and Tasneem Raja—*Identity, Culture, and the Postmodern World*

Throughout this dissertation, I offered a theoretical and methodological framework for the study of identity and asserted that it is one of the most important aspects of our everyday lives. Yet, I also provided a rationale for moving beyond the stagnant and commonplace single category identity politics, SCIP, view of identity that has been drawn upon both within and outside of the Academy for the past three or more decades. Instead of the SCIP approach, throughout this study, I proposed that the *best* way to view our identities in the 21st century is as both a communicative and rhetorical practice that mainly is managed through the manifestation of social styles. I also suggested that by analyzing our social styles as "sites of struggle," scholars could further understand how our identities have rhetorical and political implications without delimiting politics to SCIP. However, just as this dissertation addresses several issues, it also raises questions such as the following: 1) What does the future hold for the notion of polystylism? 2) What are limitations to this notion and dissertation? and 3) If this trend of identity as manifested in the rhetoric of social styles continues, what affect will it have on rhetoric, politics, society, and culture?

Therefore, in this final chapter, I will connect the major themes of the dissertation by first providing a brief recap of the major research questions that I raised as well as how they were addressed in this project. Next, I address possible limitations of the

dissertation. Then, I propose the major implications of this dissertation and how it may impact the fields of communication and rhetoric, notions of politics, our everyday lives, and American society and culture as a whole. Finally, I propose possible future research endeavors that can be undertaken in this area and conclude with final thoughts on the rhetoric of social styles as the primary way that we create and maintain our identities today.

DELVING INTO IDENTITY: MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HOW THEY WERE ADDRESSED

Overall in this dissertation, I set out to address three major research questions, which were as follows: 1) How does considering identity as rooted within a single category, or from a SCIP approach, lead to essentialist views of both identity itself and identity politics? 2) Is it possible for people to construct identities that are both unified and polycategorical? and 3) How can scholars be sensitive to rhetoric and politics while not being essentialist regarding categories of identity? These three questions were then used as a foundation for launching the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the dissertation that I tested through the two application chapters.

In posing the first research question, I tried to determine whether the old, predominant approach to identity as SCIP caused identity to be viewed as fixed and essentialist and whether this view overlooked other complexities related to both identity and identity politics. To address this first question, I offered evidence in chapters one and two as to why the SCIP view is outdated and how this approach leads to an essentialist view of identity. In contrast to SCIP, I offered a new theoretical and methodological framework of polystylism in chapters two and three as a counter to this SCIP notion of identity and politics. I also provided two examples, Buck Angel and a comparison of two prominent political families, as texts which demonstrate that the ways in which we create

and maintain our identities are and can be fluid, multiple, and often have a degree of play because we can use various styles as a form of bricolage to create identities that are multi-layered and sometimes contradictory.

The second major research question that I addressed was whether it was possible for people to create identities that are both unified and polycategorical. I assert that through the examples of Buck Angel, the Kennedys, and the Bushes, I have given sufficient evidence to answer "yes" to this question. In the cases of Buck Angel and the two political families, we can see how they construct their identities from multiple social categories, such as class, race, gender, *and* various aspects of social style (i.e. performances, language, commodities, aesthetics). Yet, these identities are not fragmented or disjointed. Instead, they are "held together" through the use of polystyle in the sense that each creation of identity draws upon or can be linked to a specific rhetorical homology of personae that is found within the larger cultural system of meaning-making.

In other words, the methodological and theoretical frameworks of polystylism allow researchers to see unity in a seemingly fragmented, postmodern world. Many scholars would argue that because the texts (i.e. Buck Angel and the two political families) create their identities through multiple social categories these identities would be disconnected. However, at least in the case of these three texts, each possesses a unified although multi-layered identity. Further, by viewing identity as a communicative and rhetorical practice, I have shown that even these various "presentations of self" are not fixed and may vary according to social situations in which people find themselves. Yet, the examples also show that identity creation is not completely free or haphazard as we are constrained by larger cultural discourses surrounding gender, class, race, social roles, and/or political expectations, which also is evident in all three texts.

The third major research question is whether scholars can be sensitive to rhetoric and politics while not being essentialist regarding categories of identity. Again, my reason for pursuing this question is that too often within the Academy and other public discourses like media people have become bogged down in the mire of essentializing political stances based upon labeling other people's attributed identities. In other words, these essentialist views lack sensitivity to both politics and rhetoric because they link a person's politics as directly deriving from one aspect of identity as a primary factor. I believe that the notion of polystylism is one way that scholars can view how identity functions rhetorically and politically while avoiding fixation and allowing for a multiplicity of meanings.

The key way that I addressed this question in the dissertation was by showing how the SCIP approach can cause researchers to obscure people's politics by rooting them in a single category of identity. Specifically, in the examples of Buck Angel, the Kennedys and the Bushes, I demonstrated how a person's politics may be entirely different than his or her identity as well as how our identities can be utilized strategically for political gain. Yet at the same time, in utilizing my method I did not base my labeling of Buck Angel's, The Kennedys', or the Bushes' respective political stances as rooted in a single category of identity. In fact, in the case of Buck Angel, I argued that it was not possible to fully understand his political views because he often does not discuss them. Yet, I was able to make a reasonable claim based on the statements I found in which he states that he is a feminist, yet also objectifies women. This example shows that politics itself can be both fluid and contradictory. In the cases of the Kennedys and Bushes, I demonstrated how social style and politics may seem out of synch, with other people's assumptions about what these politics are based solely upon SCIP, because the Irish-

Catholic Kennedys aligned more with WASPs while the blue-blooded Bushes tried to show that are just "regular" folks like everyone else.

Finally, I showed how these creations of who we are, who we are becoming, and/or who we want to be have rhetorical, political, and social implications. For example, in the case of Buck Angel I showed how identity could influence personal and political life. Likewise, in the comparison of the Kennedys and Bushes I showed how the personal often is used for political ends. Now that I have explained how the major research questions were addressed, I turn to possible limitations of this study.

POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

As with all forms of research, this dissertation has possible limitations. First, some people would argue that one limitation of the study is that each of the texts examined to test the method of polystylism is a public figure. It would seem that one reason that Buck Angel, the Kennedys, and the Bushes can utilize social style in the ways that they do is because of their respective public statuses. Therefore, how would the arguments made herein apply to "regular" people who may not have the economic means, political power, and/or privilege to create their identities in the same ways that Buck Angel, the Kennedys, and/or the Bushes can create theirs?

While the chosen texts are public figures, I assert that the theoretical framework and method of this dissertation can be applied to "ordinary" people. That is to say, while "regular" people, who are not in the public eye, may not have access to wealth, privilege and/or power on a large scale like the examples, they nevertheless are able to construct and maintain their identities through social styles albeit on a smaller scale. In this sense, they can and do create their identities in similar ways as I pointed to in each application chapter. For example, people who identify as having a health-conscious lifestyle may shop for groceries at Whole Foods Market, which sells organic and natural foods, as

opposed to another supermarket. Similarly, people use social styles to create identities through the kinds of cars they drive, the sports teams that they root for, and especially through the clothes that they wear.

Another limitation of this study, some people may assert, is that each of the texts chosen for examination is a person or the text of that person's performance although I state that this method of polystylism also applies to texts such as commodities, advertisements, and other representations of identity found in popular media. I still maintain the analysis of commodities might give scholars a sense of how some people use these commodities as a launching point from which to create their identities and/or as a major component of their identity constructions. For example, some women only buy products such as those recommended by Martha Stewart because they want to create the same kind of identity and lifestyle that encompasses the one she presents in magazines, on the Web, and/or on her television show.

Paralleling this point as stated earlier, people often use representations to construct their own identities. Therefore, in analyzing representations scholars would be able to further understand how notions about various identities are created in popular media and how people use these representations in their own lives. For example, some people use celebrities as role models for creating their own identities so when Madonna and other celebrities became heavily involved in Kabbalah many people flocked to this form of worship and more courses on it began to arise across the country. Again, I assert that scholars certainly could apply this theoretical framework and method to one of these given types of texts. As such, the examination of these other texts, such as advertisements, commodities, and/or representations is an area that could further extend the present study in future research endeavors.

Finally, some would argue that although I point out social constraints in each case, such as having limited discourses by which to discuss gender and behavior expectations by constituents for candidates, I do not explicitly deal with a text that has *severe* constraints. Because Buck Angel is largely in an "alternative" world and the Kennedys and Bushes are in the world of politics, many would assert that in-and-of-themselves these venues possess more fluidity than other social situations. Therefore, one question that remains is whether the results would be similar with texts that are under severe social constraints from other people like ostracism, chastisement, and/or the threat of death? In other words, would people in these situations be forced to conform to expected behaviors and their attributed identities or would they still have a degree of fluidity in their identity constructions? While I believe that Buck Angel, the Kennedys, and the Bushes have some social and cultural constraints, a text that has more explicit and rigid constraints would be worth exploring. Again, this limitation is one that could be addressed in future studies in this area. Since I have discussed possible limitations with the dissertation, I now want to turn to the major implications of this study.

MAJOR IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DISSERTATION

As stated previously in chapter one, some scholars like Todd Gitlin and David Brooks argue that we should no longer study identity in its relation to politics. In contrast, scholars like Robin Kelley and Molefi Asante, whom I label SCIP scholars, advocate that identity politics is crucial to our public and private lives (Gitlin in Evans 99; Brooks 17; Kelley 4-5; Asante in Lucaites, Condit and Caudill 554). Yet, the problem with both of these views is that they are *extreme* versions of both identity and politics.

On the one hand, SCIP scholars want everything to stem from the simplistic view of identity as rooted in a single category. They stress that politics derives from this single category of identity as a *primary* factor such as race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Wanting people to recognize identity politics because of discrimination against groups and claiming that minority groups often are silenced by the dominant view, SCIP scholars reify differences and conflate all matters of identity to a single category, including politics, which obscures other complications of both identity and politics.

On the other hand, scholars like Gitlin and Brooks want to ignore the fact that inequalities and discrimination do exist that can sometimes directly stem from having certain kinds of identities. That is to say, there are people who sometimes are discriminated against because they are poor, belong to various minority groups, have identities that seem against the "mainstream," and/or have identities that are considered inappropriate depending on social situations. For example, if someone is dressed like a biker she will get a different reaction than someone who is wearing a suit walking down the street late at night because it may be assumed that she is dangerous or suspect whereas the business person might be viewed as more upstanding.

Therefore, the first major implication of this study is that it bridges the gap between these two counterpoints and offers an alternative view to regarding the relationship between identity and politics in ways that do not reduce it to simplistic, essentialist answers and/or simply dismiss it all together. In this sense, the dissertation provides scholars with the ability to go beyond the debates over the *politics* of identity politics, yet still regards identity as crucial to our public and private lives. While shifting the discussion in this way, the dissertation also might provide an alternative that satisfies SCIP scholars and academics like Gitlin or Brooks because it acknowledges both viewpoints and offer a way for them to have a common ground on which to debate matters of identity and politics.

Aside from moving beyond scholarly debates over the politics of identity politics, this dissertation shows that there is a need *and* the ability to move beyond the SCIP view

of identity. As argued throughout the dissertation, the SCIP view often is one on a surface level with a single social category determining a whole host of other aspects including one's politics. In the 21st century, our creation of identities no longer can be explained by this outdated view. The SCIP approach overlooks other complications of identity in ways that this essentialist view cannot reasonably explain. For example, the SCIP view cannot easily explain gay Republicans or other politics that according to SCIP would be contra to a primary identity category. SCIP, therefore, does not account for a multiplicity of perspectives and how various factors influence our creations of identities.

I also have tried to prove that because it roots identity politics as emerging from a single category of identity, the SCIP approach creates an essentialist or fixed meaning whereas scholars such as Stuart Hall argue there are usually a multiplicity of meanings within a given text and this aspect is certainly the case with identity (Media Education Foundation). Furthermore, we also must remember that as meanings are influenced by cultural and historical changes so too do meanings associated with identities change over time such that the fixed view that SCIP scholars advocate often is an outdated perspective (Hall in Media Education Foundation).

The second major implication of this study is that while there is fluidity in our creation of identities through polystyle, these identities *still* have meanings. That is to say, some would argue that in a postmodern world of moving back and forth between various identities our identities no longer would hold any "true" meanings. In other words, if a person is conservative one day and the opposite the next, then how will we understand what it means to be a conservative? Therefore, an extreme fluidity like this example might cause confusion in social interactions. However, through the texts of Buck Angel, the Kennedys, and the Bushes, I have sufficiently demonstrated that people can create fluid identities, yet these identities are still rooted within larger systems of cultural

meaning-making such as rhetorical homologies of personae. Therefore, even in a seemingly postmodern world of identity meanings still remain relevant to our understandings of various identities.

As such, a key question that this issue of variability in identity construction raises is if identity politics is no longer the way that we view identity and instead we view identities as fluid, what affect will this have on society and culture? Again, one positive outcome of this move away from identity politics, as this dissertation suggests, is that it will help to get rid of essentialism and stereotypes of various individuals and groups. Perhaps this new view will allow people to start regarding each other as human beings and not as fragmented "Others" because of identity politics. Therefore, the theoretical framework of polystylism also allows people to engage in matters of politics across multiple identities and social categories.

However, I am not advocating for this alternative view to become the new view of identity in the *extreme*. Namely, if our identities continue along this path such that we can change identities like we change our brands of toothpaste, this function of identity also might become problematic because it could disrupt the ways in which we interact socially. In this sense, some of the social conventions for interacting with others may become confusing. People would probably not know how to interact with each other over time. Again, some might argue that this total postmodern experience of identity creation would be liberating (and perhaps it could be), but I imagine that it also would lead to complete chaos where carnival would become the rule and not the exception such that all forms of structure and meaning-making would collapse.

Consequently, one negative outcome of fluid identities might be that if people can change their identities like changing a shirt this new form of identity will be another form of extremity so instead of having everything related back to identity politics we would

have no stability at all. Yet, I argue that this worst-case scenario about identity is unlikely because our identities are constrained by social situations and larger cultural discourses surrounding them. That is to say, we are not yet at the point where this complete fluidity is practiced or acceptable. This fluidity also is still rule-governed sometimes being enforced by social etiquette and at other times being enforced by law. For example, there are still rules of social etiquette for weddings that recommend that only the bride wears all white and no one wears all black to the ceremony. Likewise, many schools require students to wear matching uniforms for safety. Finally, in many states there are still sodomy laws that prevent people from being completely open about their sexual orientations. Therefore, unless this aspect changes completely there are still constraining social situations and discourses that have a direct influence on our creations of identity today.

The third major implication that this study makes for the fields of communication and rhetoric is that it contributes to existing discussions of identity in scholarly research. As such, this dissertation provides a further rationale for the study of identity as a "newer" subject in communication and rhetoric. Hence, this dissertation hopes to steer the discussions away from the old SCIP view of identity, which is increasingly outdated in the 21st century, and instead advocates that we examine larger cultural and societal influences like mass media, consumption, and/or style and how they influence our identities as communicative and rhetorical practices. Thus, one hope for this study is that it will inspire other communication and rhetorical scholars to approach identity from a new perspective and continue to make it a focus in both areas of scholarly study.

Perhaps the most significant implication that this dissertation makes for rhetoric, communication, and politics is that it provides an answer to the question of what "political rhetoric has become and will become in the 21st century" as Barry Brummett

puts forth in "Communities, Identities, and Politics" (in Sullivan and Goldzwig 295). Brummett argues that although we have not completely moved away from traditional politics such as campaigns, speeches, and debates, political rhetoric today is "…relatively more imaginary, commodified, local, and dialectic" (in Sullivan and Goldzwig 295). He asserts that now *political rhetoric* is characterized by the following aspects: 1) it is more concerned with image and aesthetics because "…the image is the site on which much political rhetoric is played out"; 2) it is more commodified where "it is reduced to terms of the market"; 3) it is local meaning that "it offers a personally engaged, material alternative to the imaginary, and (contradictorily) it creates the illusion of the local by stressing the personal and domestic, even at the national (and imaginary) level"; and 4) it is dialect because it is "a kind of political struggle in which participants work to rearrange a work in flux" (in Sullivan and Goldzwig 295-300).

Accordingly, we can see how identity as manifested through the rhetoric of social styles would be an example of this new form of political rhetorical because, as shown throughout this dissertation, identity often is a site of struggle in which politics get worked out on a local and national level. That is to say, our creations of identity today correspond to Brummett's argument about political rhetoric because of the following: 1) they are directly intertwined with images and aesthetics; 2) they are created through the use of commodities; 3) they are locally conceived of whether on a personal or public level; and 4) their meanings are struggled over by various groups because they often are positioned in dialectical terms. Consequently, our identities might be at the very heart of political rhetoric in the 21st century. It is for this reason that communication and rhetorical scholars need to continue to study how identity functions as a form of political rhetoric on multiple levels.

In turn, our constructions of identities as primary ways that we communicate and interact with others have major political, social, and rhetorical consequences for people. There is a considerable focus on matters of identity in the 21st century with people continually discussing them in popular media and everyday conversations and this trend will continue. The focus within politics seems to be increasingly on the personal as a form of politics because traditional outlets such as participation in campaigns, rallies, and/or political speeches may seem closed off to some people.

In other words, identity construction provides people with an outlet whereas in other areas of their lives and work they may feel powerless within traditional political arenas. People sometimes feel that they have no control over larger political issues, but they can control their own appearances, what they buy, how they speak, and their performances. That is to say, increasingly people express their political views and opinions through purchases, what they wear, their performances, and their public behaviors.

While some scholars would argue that these forms of politics are "empty gestures" or vacant, meaningless acts that do not contribute to a viable public sphere, I advocate that these forms of political expression still influence others as they are struggled and fought over within public and private realms. These identity constructions also can sometimes have dire consequences because by presenting certain kinds of identities in certain social situations, like the transgender examples discussed earlier in chapter four, people may face chastisement, hostility, threats of violence, and/or even death.

Furthermore, the fact that this process of polystylism is directly linked to consumption has mixed effects on society and culture. That is to say, I believe that politics and the market have merged in both positive and negative ways. In one light,

being able to shift and have a fluidity of identities gives people agency over their lives, which many would see as positive. Again, the argument would be because people have control over who they are, want to be, or who they are becoming this aspect of fluid identities liberates them. In these instances, people do not totally have to conform to social expectations which gives them a sense of play and creativity in their identity constructions.

While I certainly argue that people can create their identities through the use of social styles which is directly linked to consumption, this heightened consumption also has negative effects such as the fact that people are putting themselves more and more in debt in order to compete with others as a form of obtaining status. People also seem to judge each other based more upon the commodities that they possess as opposed to other aspects of their personalities or identities. It definitely seems that when a person who is poor spends his last nickel on a pair of Nikes instead of food for his family, this aspect of identity construction through commodities is problematic. Likewise, when people have massive amounts of credit card debt because they are trying to demonstrate that they are wealthy when in fact they have working class incomes, this identity formation also can be problematic.

For these reasons, it is hoped that this notion of polstylism will act as a form of visual literacy by giving people the requisite tools to examine how identities are created in our 21st century lives. Instead of making identities polarized, polystylism might be a way for people to see commonalities beyond what on the surface appears to be differences. Subsequently, this framework might help people to see various ways to coalition build across multiple identity categories. Additionally, this view might help people to see how people in "traditional" political venues, like political campaign

speeches, use identities strategically and/or use SCIP strategically to simplify other complexities of their identities in order to obtain votes.

For example, the 2008 election will be coming up in two years and Democrats are already gearing up to have Hillary Rodham Clinton run for presidential office. Many people claim that they will vote for Hillary simply because she is a woman. Here, we have a SCIP view of identity operating whereas if we used the approach of polystylism we might see other issues affecting her politics and/or other complexities that arise in her creation of identity. While it is true that some people already are thinking more thoroughly about her potential as a candidate, this kind of examination may further suggest whether she truly is the best candidate for the Democratic Party and/or for the presidency. Therefore, the notion of polystylism can help to shift discussions to broader planes of identity and politics so that hopefully we do not have a repeat of the 2000 election where many people, who did not completely know or understand George W. Bush's political stances, voted for him because he seemed like a "regular" person. Since I have discussed the major implications of the dissertation, now I turn to possible future research areas.

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL STYLE: FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

As stated earlier, one way that the research of this dissertation could be extended would be for scholars to examine other texts such as commodities like cars, clothing, houses, and/or other products to analyze how people utilize these commodities in their creation and maintenance of various identities. That is to say, are some commodities more valuable than others in creating identities? Are some commodities more well-suited for the creation of identity than others? Further, while there has been a rise in studies on consumerism over the past few years, the theoretical framework of polystylism would

further help to situate how consumption functions within identity creation and maintenance as a whole.

Similarly, scholars also could study representations of identities found within popular media because these venues are ones that many people turn to in the creations of their own identities. As stated before, many people choose to wear certain clothes, choose their occupations, and behave in certain ways because their favorite celebrity performs or acts in this manner in his or her public presentations. Therefore, scholars could more closely examine how popular media may serve as role models in identity construction and the affect that this function has on people.

Extending this study out even further, aside from analyzing how people utilize social style to create identities, scholars could expand the idea of polystylism to look at how various groups, clubs, organizations and businesses use social styles to create group identities and how social styles are used to create various corporate cultures or in branding. In turn, this approach could be used to analyze how advertising and public relations campaigns function because polystylism could be used to test campaigns for their effectiveness with various audiences. Scholars also could combine this approach with quantitative or social scientific methods, such as surveys, to test market products, campaigns, and/or television commercials.

Finally, this theoretical framework and method could be combined with ethnographic research such as participant-observer and/or interviews because it would dovetail well with this kind of combined research focus. In other words, scholars could do a textual analysis and then combine this analysis with interviews of various people. On the other hand, scholars could use the notion of polystylism as a guide for conducting a participant-observer project looking for key areas of social style (i.e. performance, language, commodities, and aesthetics) and how people use them in various social

settings. In this way, researchers could directly observe people in various social settings to get a richer sense of how identities function rhetorically, politically, and socially within American culture.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON THIS DISSERTATION & IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Overall, it is hoped that this dissertation has laid some of the groundwork for continuing the study of identity across multiple fields of academic inquiry. It is also hoped that people will look at identity from a broader perspective rather than simply reducing it to SCIP. In this sense, this study could be labeled as a pragmatic undertaking mixed with a large degree of optimism. As a pragmatic endeavor, it is my firm belief that while it is easy for people to lament the way that society and culture function today with a heightened focus on identity and how this supposedly disrupts or distorts the political process, as scholars and citizens we have to work with the society that we are given. In other words, one of the functions of rhetorical scholars is to analyze society and culture as it stands so that we can make sense of it. That is to say, at some point we have to work with what we have and if politics is operating in this manner then we need to figure out a way to better understand it.

As a project of optimism, I hope that this dissertation will challenge people to move beyond the binaries. If we continue to view people from essentialist standpoints then we are guaranteed to repeat the mistakes that we have made in the past such as ostracism, discrimination, inequality, and even murder because people are seen as "Others" in a binarist view whether this labeling occurs in our larger political policies as a nation or our everyday social interactions. We have to find the common threads that unite us as human beings instead of allowing ourselves to be trapped in a world of binary oppositions.

Furthermore, while some scholars would like to dismiss style itself as being mere illusion or distraction, *social style* is where politics is being constituted, challenged, struggled for, and fought over. Therefore, on some levels this dissertation harkens back to the very foundations of the study of rhetoric where Plato in *Phaedrus* argues that we must try to seek "truth" outside of the world of illusions or the cave of shadows (48, 72-74). In contemporary society, I propose that we not only live in the cave of shadows, we also construct, manipulate, and play with our own "shadows" as we communicate our identities to others in a world of polystyle.

As John Hartley explains in *The Politics of Pictures: The Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*: "Instead of dismissing media images or discourses as unreal 'shadows in the cave,' it is necessary to recognize that images, discourses, texts, media and so on are quite real…" (2). He argues that now we need to understand "how pervasive the textualization of public life has become, and how it works"; thereby we must evaluate "the politics of pictures" and I would extend this idea to assert we must continue to examine the politics of our identities in this sense. (2). Thus, it is by exploring how our rhetorical performances of self, through the use of social styles, operate in contemporary American society that we will be able to truly understand how politics functions today.

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